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ONE YEAR OF REPRESSION

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Translated from :

EL SALVADOR : DEL GENOCIDO DE LA JUNTA MILITAR A LA ESPERANZA
DE LA LUCIA INSURRECCIONAL

Socorro Juridico
Arzobispado de San Salvador

**Commission of the Churches on International Affairs
World Council of Churches
1981**

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DIRECTOR'S INTRODUCTION

The document published in this issue of *CCIA Background Information* details one year in the traumatic history of a people suffering under a most insidious repression. It has been translated into English from a Spanish publication produced by the *Socorro Jurídico* (Legal Aid Service) of the Archdiocese of San Salvador, under the original title "EL SALVADOR : DEL GENOCIDIO DE LA JUNTA MILITAR A LA ESPERANZA DE LA LUCHA INSURRECCIONAL" (El Salvador : from the Genocide of the Military Junta to the Hope of the Insurrectional Struggle). A description of the origins and work of the *Socorro Jurídico* follows this introduction.

The assassination of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero of San Salvador during a celebration of the mass on the 24th of March, 1980, brought to the world's consciousness the brutal extent to which human rights are being trampled upon in the tiny Central American country of El Salvador. In particular, it focused attention on the systematic repression exercised against the churches of El Salvador, which have been in the forefront of the struggle for human dignity, courageously defending the aspirations of millions of impoverished peasants and workers. The martyrdom of Archbishop Romero, according to an August 1980 WCC Central Committee statement, "is a witness to the power of the crucified Christ, and a sign of solidarity with the oppressed".

According to the statement, the Central Committee furthermore "expresses its solidarity with the churches in El Salvador; it notes with alarm the increasing threats against the churches in their efforts to protect and assist the many thousands of peasants sheltered in refuges, the massacre of innocent families attempting to flee the country and the attempts of security forces to curtail the work of the churches' legal assistance to victims". It called upon "the military authorities of the Government of El Salvador immediately to cease all repressive activities", affirmed "its full spiritual, moral, material and economic support to the churches in El Salvador", reiterated "the deepest solidarity with the suffering and demands of the people", and appealed "to nations to abstain from interfering in the internal affairs of El Salvador".

Since August 1980, the violence and brutality have continued and increased. The total number of defenceless civilian victims among the Salvadorean population — *not* counting those whose lives were lost in direct confrontations with the armed forces — victims who have been assassinated by the government armed and security forces, comes to 8,660 documented cases. To this figure must be added the 4,400 additional victims of the civilian population — mostly women and children — who died in operations of the armed forces carried out in the first months of 1981. From June 1980 to January 1981, 202 children, of whom 58 were from 1 to 10 years of age were killed in operations carried out by the army and security forces.

The churches continue to be prime targets. A Baptist pastor was killed on 18 February 1981 in a town about 20 minutes' drive east of San Salvador, and there is still no news about three members of a Baptist church who have disappeared since their arrest by national guard troops on 12 January 1980. World Vision International has announced that two of its associates were shot during a recent service of Holy Communion and three others were killed and four children seriously injured in a separate attack. Killings in the country are presently occurring at around 100 per day.

Two reports from churchmen recently visiting the area both call for increased emergency aid. The Rev. Dr. Kenneth Slack, director of Christian Aid in Great Britain, said "my strong conviction after my visit is that we stand beside El Salvador Christians in a time of terrible trial... The question is whether we are prepared to give aid to those who are suffering — and this is predominantly those who are not sympathetic to the government".

The UK Methodist Church International Relations Secretary, the Rev. John Hastings, reporting from Honduras, says that over 25,000 Salvadorean refugees have arrived in that country in a desperate condition. There is an estimated total number of 200,000 displaced persons in El Salvador. "Thousands have been wandering for a year or more in the mountains of El Salvador after seeing their houses burned by the National Guard. They hid by day and travelled by night, carrying their sick and pregnant women in hammocks. The Government forces are accused by the refugees of brutality and grave atrocities. Beheaded bodies were not allowed to be buried and were left in the rivers for dogs to dispose of. Skeletons are left hanging in the trees in the Morazan district. I saw the smoke of burning villages rising across the border. I visited several new camps on the border and spoke to hundreds of people, many of them still very frightened and not knowing if they were really safe, or whether they can trust those who provide them with food and tents".

In light of these continually accumulating facts, the nature of much of the recent international attention which has been paid to El Salvador can only be meant to distort these realities and confuse world public opinion. Of particular concern is the decision by the new US Administration to make El Salvador a "test case of American resolve vis-à-vis the Soviet Union", thereby making the victims of El Salvador violence the unwitting pawns in an increasingly volatile East-West confrontation.

Already on the 7th of May, 1980, following the assassination of Archbishop Romero, the Governing Board of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA adopted a resolution on El Salvador which urged "the United States Government : 1. To halt all assistance to the military and police of El Salvador and to relocate the recently approved military aid of US\$ 5.7 million dollars to medical, economic and social assistance programmes, the benefits of which should be distributed in El Salvador by civilian or international agencies; 2. To guarantee that it would not intervene directly or covertly to determine the fate of the Salvadorean people; 3. To grasp the historic moment and update and transform its traditional policy in Central America by seeking to respond positively to the popular forces emerging in El Salvador".

The murder of four American nuns on the 2nd December 1980, led to the cessation of military and economic aid to the government junta on the part of the USA, pending conclusion of an investigation into the murders. Although this investigation has been discontinued without conclusion, the new US Administration has found it expedient not only to continue, but to increase substantially both military and economic aid to El Salvador, on the basis of allegations that anti-government guerillas were receiving arms from the Soviet Union via Cuba and Nicaragua.

It was in this context that the WCC Executive Committee, meeting in Geneva from the 9th to 13th February 1981, issued a statement "reaffirming with force" the 1980 Central Committee statement, adding new concern about the escalation of the armed conflict : "We deplore the fact that direct military assistance to El Salvador, from various sources, has increased violence and repression and delayed the search for peace. We urgently appeal that such interference cease, and call on our member churches to press for a respect for the dignity, integrity and resolve of the El Salvadorean people to determine their own future. We view with particular alarm recent reports that the United States Government has increased military, economic and political support to the El Salvadorean military authorities".

The statement also highlights the continuing repression against the Church. "We deplore in particular the severe attacks upon the clergy and lay people of the churches in El Salvador as they carry out courageous and exemplary ministries of pastoral and prophetic solidarity with the population... Finally, as we approach the first anniversary of the martyrdom of the revered pastor and Archbishop of San Salvador, Monseñor Oscar Arnulfo Romero, we echo words of his successor, Bishop Arturo Rivera Damas, as we pray that the people of El Salvador may hold to their faith and to their struggle for a more just and fraternal society, in which there will be true peace, in which fear and terror will give way to fellowship and joy".

On the 9th March 1981, speaking before the thirty-seventh session of the UN Commission on

Human Rights on behalf of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches, Mr. Roberto Cuellar, Director of the *Socorro Juridico*, affirmed what we regard as a fitting conclusion to the facts presented in this document :

"It is not through pouring arms into our country that human rights will become respected. It is not through sending military advisors to improve the capacity of a regime to impose its will by force, that the rule of law will be established. It is not by distorting and hiding the truth that justice will be achieved. It is not through a war against a people that peace will be constructed...

"We call upon those now aligned with the forces of repression in El Salvador to cease their nefarious support for this war against our people, the vast majority of whom are Christian, a people which has been denied its rightful voice in such important international fora as this one. We will awaken in this Commission, and in the whole of the international community a commitment to aid us in our efforts to gain respect for the rights of all our people, including our right to democracy and self-determination".

Official WCC statements on El Salvador, as well as CCIA interventions at the UN Human Rights Commission are to be found in the Appendices. The main body of the document published in this issue of *CCIA Background Information* is exclusively the work of the *Socorro Juridico del Arzobispado of San Salvador*. The views and assessments expressed in that document do not in all details therefore necessarily reflect official positions taken by the WCC or the CCIA. Given its local ecclesiastical source and recognized accuracy of factual information, we deem this document to be of utmost value to inform churches, Christians and all other quarters willing and able meaningfully to express their solidarity and understanding for the suffering Salvadorean people.

Leopoldo Nilus
Director
March 1981

SOCORRO JURIDICO

Arzobispado de San Salvador

The *Socorro Juridico* was founded in 1975 by a small group of Catholic lawyers for the purpose of representing the poor of San Salvador in the country's Law Courts and Tribunals. Eighty per cent of the population of this Central American country — there are 5 million of us — are without economic resources to eat and keep alive.

In 1977, Mgr. Oscar Arnulfo Romero y Galdamez became Archbishop of San Salvador. In June that year he officially recognized *Socorro Juridico* as the archiepiscopal institution responsible for promoting the defence of the human rights of the Salvadorean people.

For three years the valiant prophet, as Archbishop of San Salvador, denounced from the pulpit the constant violations of basic rights. He was "the voice of the voiceless".

No military regime (Colonel Arturo A. Molina, General Carlos H. Romero, the Military Government Junta) could destroy the authenticity of the prophet's indictment. The cases presented Sunday by Sunday were submitted beforehand to a process of documentation and legal verification in the *Socorro Juridico*. Consequently, the latter institution was regarded as closely collaborating in the pastoral work of defence of the poor under the masterly guidance of Mgr. Romero. "He made that defence the bishop's principal ministry". Our chief inspirer accompanied the people in their sorrows and hopes. "The poor and oppressed and all who were in need knew this and consequently turned to him as a matter of course in their needs. Whether it was a matter of denouncing injustices, claiming rights, mediating in land disputes, churches surrounded by security forces, or of finding missing persons..., they had recourse to the archbishop, not only as a friend to console them, but as their defender, who would place his whole episcopal power at the service of the poor and oppressed".

Close by our Mgr. Oscar Romero, that reality made its impact on us, and "far from drawing us from our faith", it placed us in the world of the poor for their unconditional defence, to understand from their point of view and promote all liberation movements which might really lead to justice and peace for the majority.

It was precisely because of its fidelity to the legacy of Mgr. Romero, that the archiepiscopal *Socorro Juridico* was occupied by the Salvadorean Armed Forces on 5 July 1980.

Since 28 November 1980, agents of the El Salvador National Police have tried on thirty occasions to seize the *Socorro Juridico* lawyers.

This unconditional defence of the poor in a society in conflict, has led to persecution of the Church. "Not just any priest or just any institution has been persecuted. That part of the Church has been persecuted and attacked which has placed itself by the side of the poor people and has come out in their defence".

In brief outline, that is the spirit of the work of the *Socorro Juridico* of the Archbishopric of San Salvador. "Defence of the poor in San Salvador means nothing else than taking on the fate of the poor".

EL SALVADOR ONE YEAR OF REPRESSION

FOREWORD

Open letter to progressive people, nations and governments of the world

When we seek to communicate, we are always conditioned by the concrete historical social reality in which we are immersed. At this moment, 15 January 1981, our reality is that of war, with a threat, by no means a remote one, of direct USA intervention.

It is the business of the strategists, the men and women of the people who are struggling from the battle-front, the leaders and militants, to perform the political analysis and correct interpretation of events, as well as to bring into action the necessary factors at every stage of the process, with a view to overcoming obstacles and achieving the objectives which will lead to the final triumph of the people.

As members of the *Socorro Juridico*, we have seldom felt obliged to more painful reflections than we are now.

With illusory hope, we had been putting together this small but valuable document full of the desolation and destruction of life in El Salvador. We meant to thread together each word, each picture with the loving respect inspired by the death of one who died because he believed that the most important thing in life was to devote the best of himself to the service of his brothers and his people.

We say "with illusory hope", because we had drunk at the wells of faith of the prophets and learned that the death of the poor will never be in vain...

One day the accumulation became too much : too many cases, numbers, proofs. And we felt in our heart of hearts, and because the facts were only too plain, that the moment had come to call things by their real name — and we termed the situation "genocide".

On that basis we understood the right of the people to fight to defend itself, to triumph and to build a new human being and a new society, in which children will have a chance to play with the birds. And the situation was hopeful, even though the persecuted, the prisoners, tortured, murdered and missing, continued to collect into interminable classified lists.

For we men and women of this people have known for some time now that a liberated El Salvador will make up for everything.

Today, however, 15 January 1981, a deeper anguish than any before has gripped us, filling us with cold anger to the very marrow. This was the news :

In December 1980 the United Nations Organization passed a resolution "urging the governments of the world not to send any type of military aid to El Salvador". After recognizing the systematic violation of human rights, the resolution implicitly considered that the Salvadorean case must be solved without intervention by any country. Nevertheless, the United States of America has violated the international juridical agreement by resuming military aid (money, war materials and military advisers) to the Military Junta in El Salvador.

We at once asked ourselves a simple, obvious question. As US military aid continues, how many documents like the present will we have to fill with new facts, cases and figures to present to international tribunals ?

That is one of our tasks as *Socorro Juridico*.

In these historic moments for the liberation of a people, what must be the task of all democratic men and women, nations and governments of the world ? Their responsibility will not be absolved with funerals, indictments or dispatch of medicaments to stop the epidemics caused by unburied corpses. None of those things will reawaken those who are alive today but in a few days may already be dead.

If this happens, what government in the world can be free of practical responsibility for the extermination and for having prevented peace being made for a nation ?

At the point where our question ends — another version might run : Who is really going to contribute to that cessation of repression for which Mgr. Romero died ? The right action of governments has to begin with a determined stance of rejection and condemnation of United States intervention in El Salvador.

Socorro Juridico
Archbishopric of San Salvador
El Salvador, 15 January 1981

I. TYPICAL CASES OF MURDER, REPRESSION AND PERSECUTION

1. POLITICAL MURDERS AND THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEM (Tables 1 and 2)

A. Complicity between official armed forces and paramilitary groups

Eighty per cent of the tragic figures of political murders committed during 1980 were perpetrated by the National Army and military National Security Forces (National Guard, National and Hacienda Police). The remaining twenty per cent were carried out by paramilitary groups such as the Death Squad, the Secret Anti-communist Army, and Orden, which act illegally with the protection and collaboration of the military national security units and the Army. Because of its importance as an agent of repression in El Salvador, we shall mention at once the emergence and nature of the Death Squad.

Brief outline : In June 1977 it was internationally known that a so-called "death squad" was threatening to exterminate all members of the Jesuit order resident in El Salvador if they did not leave the country. General Carlos Romero, the then president-elect of El Salvador, gave assurances that this act of violence would not be carried out.

Although the relations between General Romero's government and these death squads were not publicly demonstrated, all Salvadoreans were perfectly well aware of the links between them.

The "squads", as armed agents of the "extreme right", were mentioned again when at the end of January 1980, some members of the Salvadorean Christian Democrat Party reached an agreement with the Armed Forces for the realization of the political scheme of "reforms and repression".

Various members of the Christian Democrat Party who opposed the pact were assassinated. The Army, as well as the Junta and the Party, accused the supposed "squads".

In this way, many workers, teachers and students have been killed.

The "squads" meet a need of the Military Junta : The present regime has found itself obliged, like those in Guatemala and Uruguay, to employ selective violence, without appearing before public opinion as directly responsible.

If the political scheme drawn up by the United States of America was to survive, it was necessary to eliminate personalities who were creating in international public opinion a strongly critical attitude towards the regime and the participation of a few Christian Democrat militants.

The abominable murder of Mgr. Oscar Romero, the pastor and tireless inspiration of the *Socorro Juridico*, was at first attributed to the above-mentioned "squads", but has finally been traced to high Salvadorean military personalities with links with international terrorist organizations based in Miami, Florida (USA).

The subtle backing in the sphere of coordination which the Junta, the High Command of the Armed Forces, provides for these death squads without revealing any public links, made it possible for the Junta to declare that the violence is "a product of extremist groups". In this way, in the early months of 1980, the Junta, with the endorsement of some Christian Democrat civilians, was able to project a "centrist and moderate" image.

An internal document of the US State Department (dated 6 November 1980) indicated that the efficiency of these bands called "squads" was ensured by the participation of American advisers.

Socorro Juridico has continually presented evidence of the link that exists between the military forces in El Salvador and these "squads". These terror groups are composed of, advised and coordinated by the Salvadorean military. Many operations carried out by these paramilitary groups were conveniently protected by the army and security forces (See the cases listed below). The murder of the six leaders of the opposition Frente Democratico Revolucionario (FDR) on 27 November 1980, demonstrated internationally the coordination that exists between the army and the so-called "squads". It confirmed what *Socorro Juridico* has proved on many occasions : there are no extreme-right groups. It is the army itself and security forces, which act sometimes in uniform and sometimes without.

Photographic testimony : the *Socorro Juridico* is in possession of photographs (printed in the Spanish original of this document) that record the seizure of two students, Vinicio Humberto Bassaglia and Manuel Alfredo Velasquez Toledo.

National Guard units seized these students on 3 October 1980 in Fifth of November Street in the suburb of San Miguelito in the north of San Salvador.

When their relatives lodged an appeal with the Supreme Court of Justice for them to be produced in person in court, it was stated that the two had been arrested separately in an automobile works. On the morning of 3 October, the two were going independently through this suburb when units of the National Guard closed various streets and avenues. The photos show the moment of seizure, the good physical condition of the prisoners, the moment when their thumbs were tied (this is the way in which most corpses turn up in El Salvador).

The photographic sequence records the key moment when the National Guard units hand over the two captured students to civilian police not in military uniform.

Five days later the corpses of the two students with cruel marks of physical torture were found in the road to Mariona to the north of the capital.

As photos show, the "death squads" took credit for the murders.

Additional photographs again show civilian police of the "terror squads" acting in coordination with members of the Salvadorean army and police, carrying out an urban operation. The connection is proved by objective evidence.

Of innumerable cases that have been referred this year to the *Socorro Juridico* of the Archbishopric, we have chosen a few which typify the practice of genocide in relation to the incrimination and repression of the population, above all the country people.

B. Presentation of significant cases

1. 17 April 1980. Several hundred members of the paramilitary organization Orden, protected by the National Army and police of the National Guard, invaded in arms the Christian peasant communities of El Pajal, Upper Tehuiste, El Salto, San Lucas, Ulapa, Santa Lucia, Tepechame, in the San Vicente and La Paz departmental districts in the east of the country. In Upper Tehuiste, the attackers murdered campesino Bernardo Guzman and another who could not be identified because of tortures. In Llano Grande, eleven police of the National Guard and members of Orden seized and subsequently decapitated campesinos José Orellana and Fidencio Alfaro. In the peasant hamlet of Alferez in the same departmental districts, the attackers seized an old woman Francisca Espinoza (77 years old) and decapitated her; the head was placed between the legs of the corpse. In El Pajal, the following peasants were murdered: Napoleon Hernandez, Francisco Hernandez his son, Andrés Abrego, José Luis Servellon, Antonio Sanchez, José de Paz and German Argueta. In Upper Tehuiste, the attackers also murdered the married couple Manuel Vilches and Dolores de Vilches, Teofilo Morales and Elena Saravia. Finally, before leaving San Lucas they burnt the cottage of Manuel Osorio.

Table 1

Assassinations. Data fully checked by *Socorro Juridico*: Persons of the popular and progressive sectors killed for political reasons, not in military confrontations, but as a result of military operations by the Army, Security Forces, and paramilitary organizations coordinated by the High Command of the Armed Forces.

Profession	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Peasants	129	126	203	198	800	365	423	297	378	338	279	336
Students	4	22	47	61	34	111	57	54	59	106	77	112
Workers	8	9	31	30	30	24	16	24	62	46	42	96
Teachers	8	6	2	12	19	9	3	1	16	9	13	7
Professional	-	4	7	1	5	4	3	1	3	5	4	7
Shanty-town dwellers	5	5	1	-	-	13	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public employees	2	-	1	-	32	30	23	27	37	62	62	89
Priests of rel. orders	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	6
Opposition mayors	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Small traders	-	-	-	-	5	22	11	-	-	33	25	38
Unknown	110	64	194	179	272	184	145	142	275	164	277	300
Totals	268	236	488	480	1197	769	700	560	830	762	781	991
SUM TOTAL	8062											

N.B. Information exists of a larger number of persons killed among the civilian population, but access to some areas of the country for verification was impossible.

1. These figures do not include the 600 campesinos murdered on May 14 and 15, 1980 by the river Sumpul, on the frontier with Honduras (See case 4. in "Presentation of significant cases"). This massacre was denounced by the Bishops' Conference of Honduras.

2. They do not include the victims of bombardments carried out by the Salvadorean Air Force from August 1980 onwards in the areas of San Vicente (68 km. NW of the capital), El Trifinio (110 km. W of the capital) and Morazan (170 km. E of the capital). In Morazan, according to Medical Aid International, 4,000 civilians died in the bombardments. In the Guazapa zone (33 km. N of the capital), at least 400 persons were killed. No figures are available yet for the San Vicente and El Trifinio zone.

Table 2

Data checked by *Socorro Juridico* : Those responsible for political murders during the three months June, July and August 1980.

Those responsible	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1. Members of the National Army in conjunction with military Security Forces	441	354	377	261	542	554	592	587
2. National Police	9	25	10	36	10	3	5	76
3. National Guard	22	42	55	78	108	30	34	117
4. Special Police	15	29	14	7	20	14	33	40
5. Army during its operations	20	100	44	69	28	16	6	47
6. Orden (Nationalist Democratic Organization)	21	53	56	31	32	21	15	15
7. Death Squad	83	157	130	33	92	124	96	124
Totals	611	760	686	515	830	762	781	1006
SUM TOTAL	5951							

2. 18 April 1980. On the main road from the capital to San Salvador, the corpse of Matilde Fuentes, a peasant, was found bearing marks of savage tortures. The previous day she had been seized by police of the National Guard in the town of Suchitoto (38 km. north-east of San Salvador). In that rural zone members of the paramilitary organization Orden seized Maria Julia Lopez, a peasant residing in El Libano canton in Suchitoto district. Her corpse was found hanging by a rope from a tree, the breasts slashed, and with numerous bullet-holes. Six children were thus orphaned, for Matilde's husband had been murdered by members of Orden on 11 February 1980. That same day, members of Orden and soldiers of the National Army seized the peasant Adan Morales Rivas. His relatives do not know where he was taken. He is listed as missing.

3. 24 April 1980. At least 1,000 members of the National Guard, the Army and Orden, protected by two armed helicopters and military armoured vehicles, invaded the adjoining peasant villages El Campanario, San Benito, Angulo, Llano Grande, El Obrajuelo, Las Lomas, La Joya, La Pita and Santa Amalia, all in the departmental district of San Vicente (66 km. east of the capital). Various eye-witnesses declare that grenades were thrown from the helicopters on to the peasants' houses, and continual bursts of machine-gun fire were aimed at them. In this cruel attack, the following campesinos were killed: Pablo Henriquez (aged 50), Alonso Mijango (14), José Dimas (22), Sebastian Chavez (45), Antonio Mijango (59), Olinda Evora (16), Lucio Henriquez (26), Luisa and Edith Cornejo (15 and 16), Miguel Valle (35), Alejandro

Linares (42), Rodolfo Hernandez (30), Francisco Marinero (34), Felipe Cleofes, Miriam Comasagua, Martin Marinero, Pastor Andrade (30), Domingo Espinoza (60) and Narciso Ramos (50). There were also some persons wounded in this cruel military attack, but the exact number is impossible to determine.

4. 14 May 1980. The River Sumpul massacre.

The army and military units (National Guard, Hacienda Police) accompanied by members of the paramilitary organization Orden, surrounded villages in extensive rural areas. The peasant villages were totally cut off for four days. Flame-throwing helicopters were used by the Army to burn the houses. When their inhabitants fled, they were riddled with bullets by the Guard and members of Orden. In various operations, as we find throughout the report, families of peasants, including children under five, were shot. The collective slaughter of at least 600 campesinos, men, women and children, on the banks of the river Sumpul, marks the beginning of total "clean-up" in the rural zones. It denotes the coordination between the armies of El Salvador and Honduras, which in conjunction with that of Guatemala, were starting to extend the "cordon sanitaire" over Salvadorean territory.

From June onwards, extensive rural zones in El Salvador became veritable "theatres of military operations of total extermination" against the civilian population (El Trifinio, 130 km. north-west of San Salvador; vast areas in the north of the department of Morazan, 170 km. north-east of San Salvador; Aguilares and Guazapa, 35 km. to the north of San Salvador; extensive zones in the south of the department of San Vicente, 60 km. to the south-east of San Salvador).

Indiscriminate bombardments carried out by the Air Force and Artillery were the chief characteristic of this stage of systematic and intentional extermination. Humanitarian relief organizations estimate that in the zone bombarded by the Salvadorean Army in the eastern department of Morazan in October and early November, at least 4,000 people died.

Since it was the event that marked the beginning of systematic operations of collective extermination, *Socorro Juridico* considers it necessary to give a detailed account of what happened on the river Sumpul.

Chronology :

- 5 May 1980. Secret meeting of high-ranking military of Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala in the frontier town of El Poy, 100 km. north of San Salvador. This town is 20 km. from the river Sumpul, which marks the frontier between El Salvador and Honduras.
- 10 May 1980. In San Salvador, Colonel Jaime Abdul Gutierrez, close associate of Colonels Guillermo Garcia, Nicolas Carranza, Eugenio Vides Casanova (the directors of the military operations of extermination) assumed control of the Governing Junta and the Army.
- 13 May 1980. 250 soldiers of the Honduran Army set off for the Salvadorean frontier. At 11.30 a.m. they started to dig trenches along the bank of the river Sumpul. They had full military equipment.
- 14 May 1980. At 6 a.m. the military operation began. The Salvadorean Army and Guard began a mass drive on campesinos living in the villages situated in the north of the Chalatenango department (80 km. north of the capital). Hundreds of campesinos with their families took refuge on the banks of the Sumpul. Two helicopters of the Salvadorean Air Force equipped with machine-guns, as well as soldiers and police of the Guard, fired on the peasants who had sought refuge by the river. "Women tortured before the *coup de grace*, babies at the breast thrown into the air as targets, were some of the horrible scenes of this criminal slaughter. Salvadorean campesinos who crossed the river were turned back by the Honduran soldiers to the zone of the massacre. When night fell, the genocide

ceased, leaving a total of at least 600 corpses" (Communiqué of the Diocese and Bishop of Santa Rosa de Copan, Honduras, 24 June 1980).

- 15 May 1980. During the night some Honduran peasants went over the area and rescued some gravely wounded survivors. The armies left the place. At dawn on 16 May, members of the paramilitary organization Orden who had taken part in the massacre came back and patrolled the zone. They prevented witnesses from approaching. They burned houses and stole belongings of the dead.
- 19 May 1980. A Honduran campesino 4 km. downstream from the scene of the massacre, found five corpses of children under three years of age caught in a fish trap.
- 24 May 1980. Fausto Milla, parish priest of Corquin, Honduras, denounced the massacre.
- 26 May 1980. Salvadorean campesinos who had managed to take refuge in churches arrived at the Arzobispado and gave their evidence. Others who gave information to journalists disappeared after being seized by the army. In the last week of May and first week of June the two armies exercised forceful control of the area to prevent access. The Salvadorean Army made two incursions into Honduran territory in search of refugees.
- 24 June 1980. Mgr. José Carranza Chavez, bishop of Santa Rosa de Copan, a religious superior and nuns of the diocese, denounced the massacre, charging the Salvadorean and Honduran governments with responsibility for it.
- 27 June 1980. The Honduran Government threatened to expel foreign priests who had signed the denunciation communiqué.
- 29 June 1980. The Archbishopric of San Salvador ratified the denunciation and expressed solidarity with the diocese of Santa Rosa de Copan.
- 1 July 1980. The Honduran Bishops' Conference under the chairmanship of the Archbishop, Mgr. Héctor Santos, reaffirmed the denunciation of the slaughter of 600 Salvadoreans on the 14 and 15 May 1980 by the river Sumpul.
5. 30 May 1980. An agricultural cooperative situated in Guajoyo in the Santa Ana department, 110 km. west of the capital, was attacked by police of the National Guard after 11 p.m. Twelve peasants were killed. The cooperative was run by the Union Communal Salvadorense (UCS), the only organization endorsed by the Government. The Military Junta did not hesitate to stigmatize the people's politico-military organizations as responsible for this crime. The UCS later took care to contradict the official communiqué. It stated that "the shooting of twelve campesinos in Guajoyo was done by police of the National Guard. The victims were seized one by one in their homes and shot collectively by police of the National Guard".
6. 22 June 1980. The National Salvadorean Teachers' Association (Andes 21 de Junio) denounced the murder of 136 teachers belonging to the Association since the beginning of the year. Bladimir Barrios (aged 35), a teacher and leader of the "Doctor José Trinidad Garay" group of the La Parroquia suburb of Tecapan, a departmental district of Usulután in the east of the country, was gunned down in front of his pupils by heavily armed individuals protected by military combat vests, who said they were members of the Death Squad. A school-girl, Blanca Lidia Orellana, was seriously injured. This operation was coordinated by the National Guard.
7. 7 July 1980. The Ojo de Agua canton in the Cojutepeque district of the Cuzcatlan department (35 km. east of the capital) was again attacked by National Guard units and members of the paramilitary organization Orden. In this canton they killed Marcelino Ramirez (aged 28), Teresa Garcia (28), Simona Fabian (20), Antonio Garcia (40), Hipolito Palacios (25), Francisco Mendoza (20), Cristina Hernandez (26), Manuel Asencio (25), José Cruz (22),

Victor Manuel Henriquez (14) and a little girl, Maritza Henriquez (8). Later, the attackers went to the neighbouring cantonal villages San Martín, San Antonio, Soledad, El Carmen, San Andrés, Calandaria and El Carmen. As they went, they destroyed crops and sacked dwellings.

8. 7 July 1980. In the country village of San Lorenzo, a departmental district of San Vicente (66 km. to the east of the capital), thirty heavily armed individuals equipped with combat vests as used by the army and wearing masks bearing the words "Death Squad", seized a number of campesinos in their homes. At five o'clock, after seizing Eliseo Arbaiza (57), his two sons, Jorge Alberto and Rodolfo (19 and 17), Pedro Flores (51) and his two sons, one of them Luis Flores (19), Jorge Alberto Alvarado (21), Carlos Rivas (28), they tortured them and forced them to walk to the street leading out of the canton where they shot them. After committing this crime they seized Romila Hernandez (21), from Santa Helena, a neighbouring village, raped her and then decapitated her. Her relatives buried her head, the rest of her body having been burned by the murderers. The criminals had left the head in front of her relatives' house. The members of the self-styled "squad" were evacuated that same day by a helicopter of the Salvadorean National Army.

9. 9 July 1980. Thirty-one members of the peasant family Mojica Santos, all residing in the Mogotes canton of San Pablo Tacachico, departmental district of La Libertad (31 km. north-west of the capital), were shot by members of the paramilitary organization Orden. Fifteen children, all under ten years of age, were murdered clinging to their mothers. That day the National Army and police of the National Guard occupied the village and started to sack the peasant dwellings. Orden, the violent paramilitary organization, duly protected by members of the army, carried out the collective shooting of the Mojica Santos family. The humanitarian organizations were unable to get into Mogotes canton that day. The names of the victims were: a baby girl of the Mojica family, a fortnight old, not yet legally registered; Rene Santos (2 months old), Bladimir Santos (3 months), Herman Mojica Santos (4 months), Eduardo Santos (3 years old), Hugo Mojica Santos (4), Sergio Mojica (4), Elmer Mojica (5), Morella Mojica Santos (6), Joaquina Mejia Santos (8), Walter Santos (8), Demmy Santos (8), Orbelina Mojica (9), Marcos Mojica (10), Beatriz Santos (12), Esmilda Mojica Santos (13), Sonia Mojica (14), Venecia Santos (15), Victoria Santos (15), Dora Alicia Cruz (20), Genoveva Cardoza (22), Teresa Santos (25), Tomasa Santos (30), Herminia Santos (30), Rosa Santos (30), Elba Santos (30), Rosa Mojica (30), Agripina Mojica (32), Manuel Cruz (45), Domitila Santos (45), Santos Quintanilla (50), Mercedes Cruz (60), Claudia Flamenco Santos (75), Rosa Mojica (85).

10. 19 July 1980. At least 1,000 masked and heavily armed men, equipped with bullet-proof vests, wearing "Death Squad" emblems and accompanied by members of the army and of the National Guard, invaded the Mirador hacienda, the majority of whose campesinos belong to the Union Comunal Salvadoreña. The hacienda is situated in Isletas canton in the Coatepeque district of the Santa Ana department in the west of the country. Eyewitnesses report that police of the National Guard and masked men shot sixty campesinos, who had first been selected from 300 cooperativist campesinos seized. The welfare institutions were prevented from entering the zone which was completely taken over by army units.

11. 20 July 1980. A delegation of US doctors belonging to the American Public Health Association who recently visited El Salvador, denounced the attacks on professional medical personnel, health-workers and patients, as well as violations of the neutrality of hospitals and health centres. At least ten doctors have been murdered since the beginning of the year; hospitals have been invaded by the police and National Guard, and some patients taken away and never seen again, while others have been murdered. On 24 May, doctors José Calixto Benítez and Raul Pino were machine-gunned in San Miguel, the third largest city in El Salvador; in the east of the country, Q. Leonel Menéndez, a lawyer and former professor of the Central American University, was seized by a group of masked civilians when he was going to have surgical treatment in the Rosales National hospital on 21 May 1980. Two patrol cars of the National Police and a National Army truck waited near the hospital for the kidnap. His fate is so far unknown. At least twenty patients receiving medical attention in various hospital centres have been murdered in similar circumstances. Heavily armed men with bullet-proof vests enter the hospitals, find out which is the patient's bed, and murder him.

12. 8 August 1980. On this day, a member of the National Army on the roof of a government building murdered the Mexican journalist Ignacio Rodríguez Terrazas. The national opposition press and various correspondents of the international press have been machine-gunned, kidnapped or murdered this year. On 1 April 1980, three Dutch film-men (Frank Diamond, Ian Van der Putten) were machine-gunned in the centre of the capital by the National Police, and two of them seriously injured. On 24 April, a journalist of Radio WHUR of Washington DC, René Tamsen, was seized; his relatives say that the Hacienda Police carried out the abduction. He is still missing. On 11 July, the journalist Jaime Suarez, editor of the national opposition newspaper *la Cronica del Pueblo*, and a photographer of the same paper, César Najarro, were kidnapped and murdered after horrible tortures. The radio operator of Radio Cadena Central, the journalist Juan Antonio Rodríguez, was seized and murdered on 5 August. The editor of the opposition paper *El Independiente*, Jorge Pinto, has been the target of various attacks; machine-gunned several times, he has miraculously escaped. The USA woman journalist Jean Sullivan was abducted on 28 December, and her whereabouts are unknown. The journalists Ian Mates and Michael Taverna were seized in August by the National Guard.

13. 27 November 1980. At 11.20 a.m., plain-clothes police entered the San José Day School, 25 Avenida Norte, San Salvador, which houses the offices of the *Socorro Juridico* of the Archbishopric of San Salvador. Twenty minutes earlier, about 200 policemen and soldiers had surrounded the school building. Once inside, the plain-clothes police made the whole staff of this Catholic institution and various visitors lie face downwards. They then proceeded to seize the leaders of the Frente Democratico Revolucionario (FDR) who were holding a press conference for members of the national and international press in one of the classrooms. Having struck them and tied their hands behind their backs, they forced them to get into three vehicles which were then driven away. These FDR leaders were: Enrique Alvarez Cordova, president of the FDR, Manuel Franco, Juan Chacon, Humberto Mendoza, Enrique Escobar Barrera and Doroteo Hernandez. Twenty-three other persons were also seized. Subsequently the FDR leaders were found murdered; the corpses bore marks of strangulation, mutilation and bullet-holes in the skull. The bodies of Juan Chacon, Humberto Mendoza, Enrique Escobar Barrera and Doroteo Hernandez were found the day they were abducted at Km. 15 on the main road to the health resort of Apulo, to the east of the capital, while those of Enrique Alvarez Cordova and Manuel Franco were found next day at Km. 18 on the same road.

C. Evidence against the government and armed forces of El Salvador

In view of government versions attributing responsibility for this massacre to an "extreme right-wing" group, *Socorro Juridico* submits the following facts which contradict the government account. At the moment of the operation the policemen seized the porter of the San José Day School and took him to the premises of the Salvadorean Social Security Institute in the next block. According to the testimony of innumerable persons who saw the operation, the police were communicating by radio from the Social Security Institute to the school. The plain-clothes police arrived at the school armed with machine-guns and G-3 rifles, which are used only by the National Guard. The cars in which they arrived at the school bore plates which identified them as belonging to official bodies. Another proof is the impunity with which the operation was carried out: in daylight, in the biggest secondary school in the country, in one of the busiest avenues of the capital, two blocks distant from the most heavily guarded building in the country, the United States Embassy. It seems incredible that during those events no one in authority put in an appearance to provide proper protection, especially in view of the scale of the operation, which involved more than 200 "uniformed" persons surrounding the building for more than 25 minutes. But if any doubt still remained about the government's responsibility for this multiple murder, we should take into consideration the following cable of the US agency AP in which the El Salvador authorities are said to have engineered the seizure of the leaders:

"San Salvador, 27 November (AP). The authorities announced today that they have captured the top leaders of the Frente Democratico Revolucionario (FDR) which exercises political leadership over the leftist organizations which are seeking to bring down the government".

(Published in "Latest News" (second edition) of the daily paper *Excelsior*, front page, 27 November 1980)

A well-known individual of the Salvadorean National Police, Mario Saul Merino, who had taken part in the morning's operation disguised as a civilian, was also recognized later the same day in the operation of forced entry to the offices of *Socorro Juridico* in the San José Day School; this time he arrived in the uniform of the National Police. The same eye-witnesses state that during the operation they heard policemen communicating by radio with the National Police Central Barracks, answering questions as to whether the operation had been completed yet.

World public opinion, the international press, human rights organizations and church institutions must understand that in El Salvador "extreme right-wing" groups *do not exist*; it is the National Army and the "Security" Forces which, whether in uniform or not, are actively engaged in innumerable repressive operations against the people of El Salvador. It is the High Command of the Armed Forces that bears responsibility for this horrible deed, just as it does for the murder of Archbishop Oscar Romero.

2. DISAPPEARANCES — SEIZURES FOR POLITICAL REASONS

Table 3

Persons seized by the Army and military Forces and subsequently missing. Per month during 1980.

January	10
February	14
March	15
April	13
May	22
June	35
July	21
August	81
Total of political prisoners missing	211

The savage practice of causing prisoners to disappear before they have been brought before the courts has been constantly employed by the various military regimes in El Salvador. Down to 15 October 1979, *Socorro Juridico* had registered the figure of 215 persons abducted and subsequently posted "missing" by the military governments of Colonel Arturo Armando Molina and General Carlos Humberto Romero (1972-1979). In only 8 months of this year, the present Military Junta has surpassed previous military regimes in this inhuman practice. This cruel method of repression affects not only the missing person but has grave moral, psychological and social consequences for the family group as well. If the missing person is the head of the family, it is only too probable that the economic consequences will also be serious.

In 1978, the dramatic testimony of two former missing political prisoners stirred world public opinion: Reynaldo Cruz Menjivar (detained in December 1977, but succeeded in escaping from the cellars of the Hacienda Police in September 1978) and Francisco Baltazar Campos Mendoza (detained in November 1977, but escaped from the National Police in 1978). A clandestine cellar-prison of the Hacienda Police was discovered in November 1979 by two lawyers (Dr. José Fabio Castillo and Roberto Cuéllar) who proceeded to make legal application for the production in court of the campesino Rogelio Guardado.

To this report are to be added the two official notes of the Special Investigatory Commission on Political Arrests and Disappearances (Official organ of the First Military Junta: 15 October - 31 December 1979). Very many of the military at present in power are responsible, according to that Special Commission, for this inhuman and cruel practice. Until August 1980, no soldier had been brought to trial for his special participation in perpetrating these political crimes.

3. GENERAL REPRESSION

Table 4

Repression carried out by the National Army, Security Forces and paramilitary organizations on country people, urban workers, democratic private and public educational institutions, trade unions and the Church, especially of the Archbishopric.

Repressive actions	Jan	Feb	Mar	Ap-May	June	July
- Military incursion by the Army and Security Forces into campesino zones and villages	81	59	74	60	85	78
- Military operations of the Army and Security Forces against the working population (urban zones)	17	13	25	31	23	11
- Searches, forced entry and sacking of trade union student and democratic premises and those of the Arzobispado	5	6	29	15	21	14
- Machine-gunning, sabotage and dynamite attacks on premises of the same type	23	34	19	29	17	11
- Destruction and burning of campesinos' dwellings during military incursions by the Army	35	21	17	45	140	148

- On 13, 14 and 15 May 1980, one of the bloodiest operations carried out by the Army, the National Guard and the Orden paramilitary organization was perpetrated when thousands of campesinos dwelling in the northern zone of Chalatenango department (85 km. north of the capital) were pursued for many kilometers. On the river Sumpul six hundred of them were murdered, mostly women, children and old men. The river serves to mark the frontier with Honduras, and is territory under the special jurisdiction of the Organization of American States. Priests and bishops of Santa Rosa de Copan, Honduras, and the National Bishops' Conference of that country have denounced the massacre. There is photographic evidence.

- The National University of El Salvador was subjected to armed intervention by the army and security forces. Not only were academic installations damaged but 23 students were murdered. On 26 June 1980, the date of the attack, a foreign reporter observed the cruel spectacle of the murder of a 14-year old student on the university campus. This boy was shot by a National Guard. Trade union premises have been broken into: the Federacion Sindical Revolucionaria was entered by force in an army operation on 19 March 1980. In the course of this, Mauricio Barrera, a working-man and Disputes Secretary of the trade union organization, was murdered. Documents were confiscated and 25 workers seized.

- Premises of the Independiente Press Agency and the Catholic educational institutions La Sagrada Familia and San José Day School were forcibly entered by the army on 20 June and 5 July respectively.

- The *Socorro Juridico* was entered and ransacked by the army and National Police on 5 July 1980. On 16 August 1980, the army carried out an entry and search operation on a place of refuge for the persecuted authorized by the Archbishopric. These premises, sheltering more than 400 children and country women fleeing from governmental repression, are situated in Mejicanos, to the north of the capital.

- Since July 1980, the destruction of trade union premises has made it impossible for Salvadorean workers to exercise the right of association and assembly. All the premises of the

trade unions in El Salvador have been destroyed as a result of the terrorist action of the army, security and paramilitary forces backed by the present Military Junta (squadrons and secret armies). The opposition paper *El Independiente* was destroyed by dynamite in June. Its editor, Jorge Pinto has said that the National Guard was to blame for this act of terrorism. The Catholic radio station of the Archbishopric, "YSAX, the Voice of Truth", was bombed on 18 February, after Mgr. Romero had announced his letter to the President of the United States. The radio was subsequently the object of four bomb attacks. The El Salvador Human Rights Commission was also bombed at the end of August 1980. Two of its members, Maria Magdalena Henriquez and Ramon Valladares Pérez, were assassinated in October.

- The rector of the Autonomous National University, Félix Antonio Ulloa, an engineer, was murdered on 30 October 1980. A trade unionist, Antonio Zaldivar, was murdered at the beginning of November 1980.

4. PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH

A. Introduction

We are referring here to persecution of the Church in the strictest sense of the term, namely, the persecution of strictly ecclesiastical persons and institutions; we are not listing the numerous murders of many Christians of the people nor the many attacks on institutions which in one way or another are fundamentally Christian in inspiration.

The clearest case of persecution was undoubtedly the murder of Mgr. Oscar Romero, pastor and prophet of the whole Salvadorean people. He was killed because of his fidelity to the Gospel and his unequivocal stand on behalf of the poor. His murder was intended to silence the voice of the Church and render defenceless all Christians who want to follow in his footsteps.

During the year, the persecution of the Church increased in both relative and absolute terms and has extended to sectors which were previously immune. All this was done with complete immunity.

Priests, seminarians, catechists and other church workers have been murdered. Church institutions such as schools, universities, houses of monks, nuns and secular priests, have been machine-gunned and searched. Four USA nuns were raped and murdered.

Particularly significant were the attacks on YSAX, the Archbishopric's radio broadcasting station, the only organ of the media which tells the truth about the country, which dares to dissent and criticize the present government, encourage and give hope to the people. The radio suffered threats and interference, was machine-gunned, bombed and finally destroyed.

The persecution has struck at the most plainly ecclesiastical symbols. A very powerful bomb was exploded in the Archiepiscopal Curia and the Central Seminary. On various occasions churches have been gunned, mostly during liturgical services. What is most distressing and offensive to the religious feelings of the people and the Church, is that the Blessed Sacrament has been repeatedly profaned.

The facts presented show beyond doubt that a terrible persecution of the Church exists, and furthermore that it is being carried out in a premeditated and systematic way, because all sectors of the church's pastoral work and all church institutions have been victims of the persecution. This picture is incredible in itself and unthinkable in any civilized country. What is totally incredible, however, is that the present persecution should be taking place under a regime whose political leadership is in the hands of a small group that calls itself democratic and Christian. The actual perpetrators of this persecution are in almost every case members of the army and Security Forces. Ultimate responsibility falls on the Military Junta, at present led by Napoleon Duarte and Jaime Gutierrez.

Despite promises of investigation, the Military Junta throughout the year has not made any statement about their progress, even in the face of so many serious incidents. Still less has it punished those responsible, and this is all the worse because in most cases their authors are very easy to identify, since there are many witnesses. In other cases, especially those of Mgr. Romero, Fr. Marcial Serrano (28 November 1980), the four USA nuns working in El Salvador (2 December 1980) and the forced entry to the Archbishopric (19 November 1980), there are well-founded and well-known suspicions as to their authors.

Instead of proceeding to investigate, orders were given to search the *Socorro Juridico* offices, which have been prevented from functioning since 28 November 1980. All documents containing evidence against those responsible for repression and persecution of the Church were stolen.

B. Chronology of the persecution of the Church

January :

- 5 In San Salvador the UGB machine-gunned San José's Day School.
- 10 Unknown men machine-gunned the façade of the Heart of Mary Church in the middle of the night.
- 12 In Arcatao, the National Guard (NG) seized two members of religious orders, Giovanni Lerda and Nicolasa Ramirez. In the guard-post they were threatened with execution. They were freed twenty-four hours later.
- 12 The NG abducted Beatriz Velasquez Ortega, a nun, who was travelling in a bus. At the guard-post she was threatened with execution. She was set free the next day.
- 22 In San Salvador the National Police machine-gunned the Rosary Church, in which there were 308 refugees.
- 22 The OLC dynamited the Archbishopric premises.
- 28 Members of the NG and of Orden evacuated the Church of Ilobasco and shot four of its occupants.
- 29 Maria Ercella Martinez and Ana Coralia Martinez, active workers of the parish church of Aguilares, were seized, tortured and murdered. Plain-clothes police attacked the Church of St Francis in San Miguel; four people died. The Cathedral of Santa Ana and the churches of Ahuachapan, Ilobasco and Santa Rosa de Lima were machine-gunned. The door of the convent of the Divine Providence Church was forced, and the priests' house in the Col Atlacatl of San Salvador was searched.

February :

- 2 Unknown men machine-gunned the Rosary Church in San Salvador.
- 3 Three dead and 18 wounded as the result of the machine-gunning of visitors to an exhibition in the porch of the Rosary Church in San Salvador.
- 16 The residence of the Jesuit Fathers was machine-gunned. Bursts of automatic fire were heard and about a hundred bullet-holes found.
- 18 Police of the NG machine-gunned the Nejapa parish church at half-past three in the morning.
- 18 Two powerful bombs completely destroyed the transmitter plant of the Archbishopric radio station.
- 18 A bomb destroyed part of the library of the Central American University run by the Jesuit Fathers.
- 19 The Tonacatepeque Church machine-gunned. Unknown men machine-gun the Sacred Heart School.

March :

- 1 Shots fired at the San Miguel Church.
- 3 José Trinidad Canales, a teacher at the San José Day School, was riddled with bullets.

- 7 In San Miguel, the bodies of seven victims of torture were found, among them a catechist.
- 8 The catechist Ruben Benitez of La Union parish was found murdered. On 5 March the NG had questioned him in his home.
- 9 The main facade of the Rosary Church in San Salvador was machine-gunned from a number of vehicles. Hours afterwards, well-armed military attempted to evacuate it with heavy fire lasting about half an hour.
- 9 Inside the Sacred Heart Basilica a suitcase was discovered with 72 sticks of dynamite and a device set to explode at 5 p.m., when Mgr. Romero was to celebrate Mass for Mario Zamora, a murdered Christian Democratic Party leader.
- 12 Combined units (40 police) broke down the door and searched the dwelling of the priests of the Colonia Zacamil, stealing documents.
- 16 Threats of death to a peasant family for having been friendly with Fr. Rutilio Grande.
- 16 A bomb exploded in the ARS Sacerdotal Cooperative, causing material damage.
- 22 The National Police entered the precincts of the Central American University (UCA), killed one student, seized two more and sowed panic among students and teachers.
- 24 Mgr. Oscar Arnulfo Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador, was murdered.
- 26 During the procession bringing the body of Mgr. Romero to the Cathedral, the National Guard fired shots in the air and arrested three youths organizing the procession.
- 29 The Archdiocesan Caritas denounced the murder by unknown men of one of its promoters in El Salitre.
- 30 Snipers fired shots at the crowd attending the funeral of Mgr. Romero. Prelates attending the funeral issued the following declaration :
"The following is what we could see from the steps of the Cathedral and its towers, and the evidence we have gathered on our rounds in the city :
(a) The sudden explosion of a powerful bomb was heard; several witnesses state they saw this thrown from the National Palace.
(b) Then bursts of fire and shots rang out; several of the priests present stated that these came from the second storey of the National Palace.
(c) We saw or could verify the presence of the Security Forces in the streets of San Salvador and in the approaches to the city since the early hours of the morning".

April :

- 23 The NG attacked a group of Christians of the San José Segardo canton of San Martin and murdered Maria Elena Perez, a catechist of the parish of San Martin.
- 26 In San Pedro Perulapan, members of the Army and plain-clothes policemen tortured and killed 7 catechists.
- 27 In San José Cortés, three members of the Christian communities were kidnapped.
- 28 Combined units broke into the Church of San Martin, destroyed the altar and profaned the Tabernacle. They also ransacked the parish priest's house.

May :

- 1 The Church of Rosario de Mora in the department of San Salvador was machine-gunned.
- 1 The convent house of Rosario de Mora machine-gunned.
- 14 The NG machine-gunned the Cathedral of San Salvador; one dead.
- 15 The Salvadorean Secret Army (SSA) exploded a bomb in the Don Rua Church (Salesian Fathers).
- 15 A bomb exploded in the La Madonna Social Institute of the Salesian Nuns. The SSA is responsible for this.
- 15 During the night, the Rosary Church of San Salvador (Dominican Fathers) is machine-gunned.
- 17 The Army searched the San José Villanueva Convent and abducted Sister Teresa Larios.
- 18 Unknown men machine-gunned the offices of the Catholic radio station YSAX.
- 20 Bombs were thrown at the studios and offices of the Archbishopric radio station; the dynamite device did not detonate.
- 20 Unknown men machine-gunned the Don Rua Church (Maria Auxiliadora).
- 23 In Quebrada del Llano (El Paisnal), the NG murdered a catechist, Luisa Jimenez.

- 29 A Security Forces unit seized a young catechist; his corpse was found on the side-road leading to the Amapulaga tourist centre.

June :

- 1 The religious community of Citala withdrew for security reasons.
- 4 Mauricio Flores Cardona, a teacher at the Divine Providence School, San Salvador, was murdered before the eyes of the schoolgirls.
- 7 A military patrol attacked two seminarists engaged in pastoral work in Tamanique, La Libertad department.
- 8 Meetings of Christian communities of Potonico, Los Ranchos and Reubicacion brutally harassed by security forces.
- 9 Disappearance of Ismael Enrique Pineda, a promoter of the Archdiocesan Caritas, and another member of the National Caritas offices. Both had gone in a vehicle of the Archbishopric, with food, as part of the mother-infant programme, to Miraflores canton, Cojutepeque district.
- 12 The National Police broke into the dwelling-house of the Oblate Sacred Heart Sisters in San Salvador.
- 12 Uniformed men broke into the residence of the Zacamil Secular Institute in San Salvador.
- 12 A military operation interrupted the funeral of a murdered campesino in a canton of Usulután.
- 12 A catechist was seized in the San Pedro canton of Usulután, tortured and his finger-joints broken.
- 14 Murder of Fr. Cosme Spezzotto, an Italian Franciscan, aged 57, parish priest of San Juan Nonualco for 27 years. He was killed when saying his office in the church.
- 19 Combined units of the National Police, National Guard and National Army, searched the Holy Family School, stealing property of the nuns and destroying the portrait of Mgr. Romero. During the search, one nun and five employees were arrested.
- 21 The "Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez" Anti-communist Brigades machine-gunned the Holy Family School.
- 25 The Army made a brutal search of Aguilares parish church.
- 29 Two powerful bombs exploded in the precincts of the Central American University, destroying a considerable part of the university press.

July :

- 5 Members of the Armed Forces searched the San José Catholic Day School. Soldiers posted in the street prevented the Rector and Administrator from entering the school.
- 5 Security Forces and National Army occupied and ransacked the office of *Socorro Juridico*.
- 5 The Salvadorean Anti-communist Army (EAS) repeatedly interfered with the programmes of YSAX, the Catholic radio station.
- 6 A member of Orden attempted to murder Sor Dionisia in Rosario de Mora, department of San Salvador, wounding her with a machete.
- 18 Mgr. Rivera Damas denounced in his sermon threats that had been received against the YSAX radio station.
- 25 Combined forces supported by members of Orden, murdered a seminarist José Othmaro Caceres, and twelve other persons in a military operation carried out in the Los Leones hamlet of the Plataneros canton in Cuscatlan department. Caceres died from several bullets in the chest, then his head was smashed by blows from a machete.
- 25 Leaders of Christian communities were pursued by combined forces in La Nueva Encarnacion canton of San Juan Opico.
- 26 Combined forces and members of Orden seized three priests going to say Mass in El Jicaró and Las Minas canton in Chalatenango department. They ransacked the car and took them to the Chalatenango barracks.

August :

- 8 Unknown police burst into the parish church of Calle Real canton, profaned the Tabernacle

- and removed the ciborium with the consecrated hosts.
- 12 Army units forced the main door of the Huizucar church, profaned the Tabernacle and the mass altar.
- 12 Combined forces searched Fatima school of Santa Tecla during the night.
- 13 At 6 a.m. the Fatima school was surrounded by Army units.
- 13 The Hacienda Police seized Sandra Price, an American nun in Soyapango; she was freed through negotiations of the US Ambassador.
- 20 Security forces surrounded and entered the premises occupied by the parish house of the church of the Colonia Santa Lucia, of Ilopango.
- 20 Security forces surrounded and invaded the refugee centre installed in the Domus Marie Retreat House, Mejicanos.
- 20 Security forces seized and murdered five catechists in Las Delicias canton of San Martin.
- 25 Policemen of the National Police detained, interrogated and beat a seminarist in Santa Tecla.
- 30 Combined forces broke open the main door of the church of San Martin with gunshots and destroyed parts of the church interior.

September:

- 5 Ten members of the Army under the command of a lieutenant, searched the parish church of San Francisco, Mejicanos.
- 7 Members of Orden harassed and threatened with death the Carmelite nuns of Ciudad Barrios.
- 11 Combined forces searched the Colonial Church, Huizucar.
- 13 Five bombs were placed in the transmitting plant of the archiepiscopal radio station YSAX; only one exploded, damaging the aerial.
- 17 Combined forces machine-gunned the Cathedral of San Miguel.
- 18 Combined forces searched the residence of the Sacred Heart Oblate Sisters in San Salvador.
- 18 The Cathedral and Calvary Church in San Salvador were machine-gunned.
- 18 Combined Security Forces machine-gunned and entered the Cathedral of San Miguel, leaving five dead and seizing nine others who were found murdered two days later, bearing Death Squad labels.
- 18 Combined Security Forces machine-gunned at midday the church of Zacatecoluca; in the evening they entered the church, where they killed 10 campesinos and seized 50 more, 26 of whom were found, on 20 and 21 September, murdered, with Death Squad placards.
- 19 The NG searched the church of Plan del Pino canton in San Salvador department.
- 19 The Cathedral and Calvary Church of San Salvador were machine-gunned once again.
- 20 Heavily-armed men, some uniformed, dynamited the transmitters of the Archbishopric radio station. They placed the first bomb at the gate leading to the plant. When this was destroyed they went in firing submachine guns until they reached the building, where they exploded two more bombs. As they didn't succeed in destroying the transmitter completely, the same individuals returned an hour later and placed two more bombs which completely wrecked the plant.
- 21 The Army searched the Holy Family School of the Assumption nuns, Santa Ana, breaking down a door.
- 21 Mgr. Rivera Damas in his homily said: "We regard as condemnable from every point of view the methods used by the army in evacuating at the cost of considerable casualties in dead and wounded, the Cathedral of San Miguel and Santa Lucia in Zacatecoluca".
- 22 The San Salvador Cathedral was machine-gunned yet again.
- 24 In Guazapa, the CMHM burned the parish archives, the portraits of John Paul II and Mgr. Romero. They burned the convent house and threatened the nuns so as to get them to leave the area.
- 26 Combined forces machine-gunned the Cathedral of San Salvador.
- 29 Army units broke into and ransacked the convent house of San Antonio Los Ranchos, Chalatenango, and burned a pile of Bibles and catechisms.
- 29 An Army detachment broke into and sacked the church of San Antonio Los Ranchos. They broke open the Tabernacle, left the ciborium on the ground, having removed the con-

secrated hosts.

30 Two teachers of the Catholic San José Day School were murdered at the door of the school.

October :

- 6 Security forces broke into the dwelling of a priest, Manuel Antonio Reyes Monico, dragged him outside and the next day he was found murdered.
- 6 Cantonal military patrols searched the storeroom of the Archdiocesan Caritas in Aguilares.
- 6 A cantonal patrol entered the porch of Aguilares church and fired shots in the air.

C. Outstanding cases of persecution of the Church

1. On 25 July 1980, police of the National Guard and members of Orden murdered the young seminarist José Otsmaro Caceres. Caceres, who was to have been ordained priest on 27 July was engaged with some campesinos in building a small church in Plantanares canton of Suchitoto (35 km. north of the capital). In this incident the police killed 13 peasants.

The priest Cosme Spezzotto, an Italian national, was murdered in the Church of San Juan Nonualco, La Paz department, 47 km. east of the capital. In recent sermons he had denounced the repression suffered by peasants in the San Juan Nonualco area.

2. Forced entry into the premises of the Archbishopric of San Salvador

All the employees, workmen and executives of the Criterio printing-press, where the periodical Orientación is published, and the Catholic Radio YSAX, were witnesses of the military operation directed by USA military on 19 November 1980.

The Archbishopric was surrounded by armoured vehicles at 4 p.m. so that in a combined and perfectly coordinated operation a number of soldiers not in uniform could enter the premises and carry out a violent search. The premises of one of the ten refugee centres of the Archbishopric set up for the protection of women and children, was also broken into. The medical aid clinic was destroyed.

The Archbishopric and its environs remained surrounded by policemen of the National Guard for two hours. In the course of their incursion, the soldiers beat up various employees of the Archbishopric.

3. Abduction and disappearance of Fr. Ernesto Abrego, murder of various relatives

Fr. Ernesto Abrego, a priest of the San Salvador archdiocese, left the city of Guatemala for El Salvador on 23 November 1980, in a private car accompanied by his brother Guillermo Salvador Abrego, Mrs. Teresa Galvez Lievano, a widow, and her daughter Ana Maria Lievano. Witnesses say they took the frontier road called "Las Chinamas".

Mr. Luis Abrego who lived in Guatemala, Fr. Abrego's brother, learning that he had not arrived at his destination, set off with Dr. Jaime Bolanos for San Salvador. On 29 November they left to return to Guatemala. Nothing more was heard of them until their corpses were found in Juayua in the Sonsonate department, 70 km. west of the capital.

Another brother of Fr. Abrego residing in Guatemala, Mr. Carlos Abrego, received a telephone message that if he went to the bar of the Camino Real Hotel, Guatemala, he would get news of his brothers. That is the last that is known of him; he disappeared. Of Fr. Abrego's four brothers, three are missing and one murdered.

4. Fr. Manuel Antonio Reyes Monico, a priest of the San Salvador Archdiocese, was murdered on 6 October 1980. His house was broken into by the National Police who took him away. Next day his corpse was found in a village near San Salvador, with one bullet through the mouth and another in the chest.

5. Fr. Marcial Serrano, parish priest of Olocuiltla, was abducted by police of the National Guard

when he was leaving Chalpipa canton in Santiago Texacuangos district 40 km. east of the capital, after saying mass. This occurred on Friday 28 November at 5 p.m. His car was found in a National Guard barracks. It has been ascertained that his body is at the bottom of Lake Ilopango, near San Salvador, though it has been impossible to recover it.

6. Murder of four USA nuns

The nuns Ita Ford, Maura Clarke, Dorothy Kzelm and the secular missionary Jean Donovan, were seized on 2 December 1980 when the two latter went to the El Salvador international airport to meet the first two, who were arriving on a Panamanian Air Line flight. Their bodies were found at Santiago Nonualco in La Paz department, with marks of violence. The forensic medical report judged that at least three of them had presumably been raped. The underclothes were missing. Mgr. Arturo Rivera y Damas signed a communiqué stating that "when search was made for them, their car was found completely burnt out at Km. 41, a short distance from the point where, hours before, a contingent of members of the National Guard had earlier stopped two cars with priests and nuns". Witnesses state that the United States Ambassador, who was present at the formal exhumation proceedings, asked for the Santiago Nonualco magistrate to be brought to him. The magistrate stated that if he were granted protection, he would give him other facts of which he was aware. Two days later the said magistrate was murdered.

D. Communiqué of the Bishop, Apostolic Administrator, priests and religious of the Archdiocese of San Salvador

We, the bishop, priests and nuns, wish to present to all Christians, to the Salvadorean people and to all men and women of goodwill throughout the world, a clear and forthright statement about the recent cruel events directed against the Church in this country. As teachers, we feel called upon to tell the truth. As pastors we have an obligation to accompany, guide and encourage the people of God who at this moment feel terrorized and impotent in face of so much barbarity. We speak with the responsibility which the Lord demands of us, as well as the distress and suffering of the Salvadorean people. We have no other interest than the fulfilment of our duty as pastors.

1. We want in the first place to clarify the latest and cruellest acts of persecution of the Church. We denounce and strongly condemn the abduction of Fr. Marcial Serrano, parish priest of Olocuilta, on 28 November; everything points to his having been murdered. Fr. Serrano had just celebrated Mass in Chalipapa canton and was going back to his parish. However, instead of saying Mass in the parish, he was seen by eye-witnesses returning by the same road in the company of members of the Army. He has not been seen since. His pick-up, with a changed number-plate, was seen at the National Guard post in San Miguel Tepezontes. The members of the Guard said they had found the pick-up abandoned in a certain place. Eye-witnesses, however, contradict that version, since they did not see the pick-up in that place nor the National Guard going to fetch it.

We denounce and strongly condemn the kidnapping, torture (very probably the rape of three of them) and murder of Sisters Maura and Ita of the Maryknoll Congregation, of Sister Dorothy of the Ursuline Congregation of the Diocese of Cleveland, and of Miss Jean Donovan, a secular missionary. On 2 December, Sister Dorothy and Miss Donovan, who worked in La Libertad parish, went to meet the other two sisters at the airport. Soon after they were missed, their car was found completely burnt out at Km. 41, a short distance from the point where a Security Forces post had previously stopped two cars carrying priests and nuns.

We denounce and condemn the abduction of Fr. Ernesto Abrego. On 23 November he was coming from Guatemala by car with various relatives; the whereabouts of all of them is unknown to this day. Everything points to his having been murdered.

2. These criminal acts of persecution of the Church are the culmination of four years of persecution, and have increased in quantity and cruelty in this year 1980, with the coming of the new political leadership of the country by the military and the Christian Democratic Party. This year those murdered included Mgr. Oscar Romero, pastor and prophet of the Church and of the Salvadorean people, two priests, Frs. Spezzotto and Manuel Reyes and a seminarist soon to be

ordained, as well as a large number of catechists, lay readers and Christian faithful. This year, the various pastoral workers, priests, nuns, religious catechists, have been threatened with death, arrested, kidnapped and their residences searched, machine-gunned or dynamited. The attacks themselves have occurred in Catholic schools, premises of the Archbishopric of San Salvador such as the *Criterio* printing press, the YSAX transmitter, the *Socorro Juridico*. This year, churches have been desecrated, fired upon, sometimes their occupants have been murdered and on a number of occasions even the Blessed Sacrament has been profaned. In short, in the course of the year so far the Church has seen itself attacked in all its sectors, in its pastoral work, its educational institutions and its social communications media. It has been the object of a cruel and systematic persecution, which despite the Government's promises, far from diminishing, has increased, as the latest events show.

3. While we witness all these facts with impotent horror, we notice that in the commercial communications media, in the official declarations of the Armed Forces and the Governing Junta, these facts and their interpretation are very often passed over in silence, or distorted, or falsified.

On the other hand, the Church's media are silenced with bombs and murders, as in the most notorious case of YSAX. In these circumstances, we have a sacred obligation to tell the truth about the persecution of the Church and those responsible for it.

The Church is persecuted because it tells the truth which inconveniences the powerful, and because it has deliberately chosen to side with the poor of this country who for centuries have been oppressed by unjust structures and who at the present time continue to be oppressed, and, furthermore, repressed with a virulence which verges on the inconceivable.

Although those directly responsible for this persecution try to shrug it off by facile reference to the violence of the right and the left, or those protected by a powerful military political apparatus, nevertheless in almost four years of persecution that the Church has suffered, it has been evident that the majority of the acts of persecution have been perpetrated by members of the Security Forces and paramilitary organizations. Consequently we reject versions that throw the blame on other social groups, such as some members of the Government have sometimes put forward.

4. We therefore attribute responsibility for the persecution of the Church and specifically for the murders, whether of priests or of pastoral workers, to the Security Forces and extreme right-wing groups. Consequently we also blame the Governing Junta, which exercises supreme command of the Armed Forces and is therefore responsible for the actions of their members. We deplore the fact that neither the governments preceding the Junta nor the present Revolutionary Governing Junta itself have fulfilled their promise to clarify the criminal acts of homicide committed against Mgr. Romero, priests, nuns and pastoral workers.

Accordingly, government declarations lack credibility, and we cannot accept the well-worn excuses after the event, nor the promises of investigation.

Only an immediate and effective cessation of the repression and persecution could demonstrate the decided will to put a stop to them and exonerate the Junta from responsibility to any extent at all. And only such an immediate cessation of repression and persecution would give credibility to the repeated offers of dialogue aimed at the pacification of the country. Otherwise, all chances of genuine peace in the country by non-violent means are being strangled.

5. The latest murders also involve the added circumstance that the victims were three USA nuns and a woman secular missionary. These nuns, who came to this country to devote their lives with abnegation and generosity, deserve a tribute of admiration and gratitude, as they show the true greatness, solidarity and help of many Christian men and women of our neighbour country, the United States. They also show, however, of what the help of the Government of the United States to El Salvador should not consist. Consequently, we demand of the Government of the United States, as our martyred archbishop, Mgr. Romero, requested in a prophetic gesture, not to provide military aid to our Government, since despite declarations about its purpose, military aid facilitates repression of the people and persecution of the Church.

6. This is our word of truth. But we also want to say a word of encouragement and hope to Christians and to the people who are suffering a cruel persecution, as well as a word of solidarity to our pastoral workers so that they may not feel abandoned by their pastors in such harsh trials.

Persecution is a sign of the authenticity of the Church, because it likens it to Jesus Christ its founder who also was persecuted for speaking the truth and taking the side of the poor, and also because persecution places it in the midst of the distress and suffering of the people, who are poor. Consequently we must not weaken. A persecuted Church today is like Jesus Christ, the servant of God who takes upon himself the sin of the world, the sin of injustice and repression. That Church is always crucified in the end, and many Christians today are raised on the cross.

By our faith, however, we know that that cross leads to the glorious resurrection with Jesus Christ and to the historical liberation which will rebound to a more just and more fraternal society in which there will be true peace where fear and terror give way to fraternity and joy.

As Christians, we believe that the corpses of Ita, Maura, Jean and Dorothy, four Christian women who gave their lives for the poor, will be a pledge of hope and Christian fortitude, of justice for the poor and of the peace so longed for by Salvadoreans.

We are in Advent, which is a time of waiting and of hope. We trust in God; let us be faithful to our decision to take the side of the poor, and let us share their sufferings. One day soon this hope will be realized and there will be justice and peace for the poor. In the meantime, let us remember the ground of our hope. "Do not be afraid", Christ tells us, "I have overcome the world".

*(Seal) Arturo Rivera y Damas
Bishop, Apostolic Administrator of the
Archdiocese of San Salvador*

II. GENOCIDE IN EL SALVADOR ?

1. DEFINING GENOCIDE

The violation of human rights in our country already has its history. In the years 1977-79 alone, four inquiries were conducted by international observers (1), in which repeated violations were proved and recommendations were made to the Salvadorean Government that it should guarantee respect for and observance of these rights.

We can also recall that at the beginning of 1979, the Organization of American States (OAS) had as a point on the agenda of its General Assembly, the possibility of applying sanctions against the regime in El Salvador for its constant violation of those human rights listed in the American Convention of Rights (San José, 1969). The point was never discussed in the Ordinary General Assembly because of the events in El Salvador on 15 October 1979.

Since that date the violation of human rights has increased at an exponential rate of growth, despite all the statements of the Armed Forces to the contrary, and against all the hopes of the Salvadorean people and the international community.

We can no longer speak of the mere violation of human rights in El Salvador. The statistics prove that in quantitative and qualitative terms, a policy of systematic extermination is being carried out against a wide sector of the Salvadorean people, and to achieve this, an apparatus of extermination has been designed and is constantly up-dated.

The nations of the world have a name for the systematic and intentional extermination by governments of whole sectors of populations they are supposed to represent. That name is *genocide*. The purpose of this chapter is to show that the present Military-Christian Democrat Junta is developing and implementing a policy of genocide against the Salvadorean people.

We base our argument on the following points :

- a) The elimination of wide sectors of the Salvadorean people has reached quantitatively proportions of *extermination*. Current rates of repression, if maintained, imply a total of some 15,000 defenceless Salvadoreans assassinated in the period of a year.
- b) The extermination is also *systematic* in so far as it is directed against that sector of the population that is ideologically opposed to the present regime. It is also indiscriminate against the civil population in general in so far as it is impossible for the government to identify in any systematic way who belongs to the opposition, given its strength and size.
- c) The extermination is also *intentional*, in so far as the regime has created the necessary juridical and political instruments to put the policy into practice, as well as an apparatus of extermination. Prior to the creation of these instruments, the Junta issued a series of

1) We refer to the following reports : Report of the US State Department to the Foreign Relations Committees of the US Senate and Congress (1978); Report of the British Parliamentary Delegation (Dec. 1978); Report and Findings of the Interamerican Human Rights Commission of the Organization of American States (Nov. 1978); Report of the International Commission of Jurists (1978). See also the article by Dr. Ungo : "Los Derechos Humanos, Condición Necesaria para la Paz y Convivencia Social en El Salvador" (ECA, No. 369/370, July/August 1979, Year XXXIV), for a summary of the main findings of the above reports.

ideological statements aimed at mis-interpreting and mis-representing the political opposition and at providing justification for its policy of extermination.

Following the Second World War and in reaction to the bloodshed under Nazism, the peoples and nations of the world accepted the term *genocide* as an element of international law.

In 1945 the *Charter of the Nuremberg Trials* listed persecution for religious or racial motives as a crime for which the Nazis could be tried. The same Charter established the principle of individual responsibility of those government officials responsible for putting into practice the policy of extermination.

In 1948 the United Nations held a *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide*. The crime of genocide was defined as the systematic and intentional extermination, total or partial, that a government practices against a defined group for ethnic, racial or religious reasons. For the punishment of genocide, it established the principle of national courts of law within the territory where genocide has been committed or international tribunals (2).

This Convention was ratified by El Salvador on 9 December 1948 (3). Interestingly, the United States of America never ratified the agreements of this Convention, on the grounds that its national sovereignty would be violated by the clauses on international tribunals and on the individual responsibility of government officials (4).

Genocide forms part of the history of mankind, independently of the experiences of 1944 or the official recognition given to it in 1948. This century has witnessed two classic examples of it : the genocide of the Armenian people by the Turks as the Ottoman empire came to an end, and the genocide of the Jewish and Slav peoples by the nazis during the Second World War.

The second half of this century has brought with it the need to amplify the classic definition of the term genocide, a need as yet unrecognized in international circles. The various struggles throughout the world for national liberation have created the need to amplify the term genocide to include the systematic and intentional extermination, total or partial, that a government practices against a defined group for ethnic, racial or religious reasons, but also for *ideological* reasons.

Can anyone deny, by way of example, that the systematic and intentional extermination practiced by the regime of the Shah of Iran against the people of Iran, or that of the regime of Saigon with its American allies against the people of Vietnam, or that of the regime of Somoza against the people of Nicaragua were in effect examples of genocide ? Leaving aside the quantitative factor, these three cases shared in common the will to exterminate systematically the political opposition. Given that the majority of the population were in political opposition to the regimes, genocide resulted.

2. EXTERMINATION : THE STATISTICAL EVIDENCE

Despite the official negotiations on the matter, the situation in El Salvador appears to be very similar to the three examples cited above : The extent of the repression and repressive practices is such that both in quantitative and qualitative terms, one can no longer speak merely of "systematic violation of human rights"; it is rapidly reaching a state that can only be described as *extermination*.

2) THE NEW COLUMBIA ENCYCLOPEDIA. New York : J.B. Lippincott Company 1975 : p.1060.

3) Interamerican Human Rights Commission. VIOLACION DE LOS DERECHOS HUMANOS EN EL SALVADOR, San José : Organization of American States, 1979; p.64.

4) THE NEW COLUMBIA ENCYCLOPEDIA. op.cit.

Repression as such is no novelty in the history of El Salvador. In 1932 between 25 and 30 thousand men, women and children were assassinated (5). It was in this same year that the long line of military dictatorships was installed — dictatorships that during fifty years have been the *modus vivendi* for the Salvadorean people. One of the objectives of the military revolt of 15 October 1979 was supposedly to bring this state of affairs to an end. This is stated explicitly in the Declaration of the Armed Forces in which they presented their reasons for deposing the government of General Carlos Humberto Romero and for the installation of the Revolutionary Junta, composed mainly of civilians (6). An emergency programme of government was proposed for the period leading up to free elections; within this emergency programme the following objectives were stated :

I. Terminate corruption and the use of violence.

- a) A concerted attack on those extremist organizations that violate human rights and the dissolution of ORDEN.

II. Guarantee human rights.

- a) By creating, within a reasonable period of time, the necessary conditions for free elections.
 b) Allowing the constitution of political parties of all ideologies, so as to strengthen the democratic system.
 c) Declaring a general amnesty for all political exiles and political prisoners.
 d) Recognizing the right of all sectors of the population to form Trade Unions.
 e) Stimulating freedom of thought, within the limits of basic ethics. (7)

We can now examine what in fact has happened since that illustrious fifteenth of October.

A. Quantitative aspects

Table 5 presents comparative figures for 1978 and the first nine months of 1979 (up to the moment of the *coup d'état*) for "Assassinations for Political Motives carried out by the Security Forces".

POLITICALLY MOTIVATED ASSASSINATIONS CARRIED OUT BY THE SECURITY FORCES : JANUARY 1978 - SEPTEMBER 1979. BY PROFESSION

PROFESSION	1978	1979									
	TOTAL	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	TOTAL
CAMPESINO	83	3	7	16	13	43	70	15	5	7	179
WORKERS	12	1	7	5	12	22	15	5	8	5	80
STUDENTS	2	4	1	1	7	30	4	3	2	13	65
TEACHERS	4	-	1	1	3	11	12	2	-	3	33
PROFESSIONAL	-	-	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	-	9
RELIGIOUS	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	3
UNKNOWN	45	6	1	13	22	52	38	27	28	24	211
TOTALS	147	15	18	38	58	160	141	53	45	52	580

Source : SOCIAL COMMUNICATION SECRETARIATE OF THE ARCHBISHOPRIC.

Informe sobre la Represión en El Salvador (Boletín Informativo Internacional, Número 10)

5) See Thomas P. Anderson, *MATANZA, Nebraska : University of Nebraska Press. 1971 : p.134ff.*

6) "Proclama de la Junta de Gobierno Revolucionaria", *La Prensa Gráfica*, 16 October 1979, p.2.

7) *Ibid.*

In the 21 months between January 1978 and September 1979, 727 assassinations for political motives were attributed to the Security Forces. In 1978 the average was 12.25 politically motivated assassinations per month, while in the first nine months of 1979 this monthly average had already risen to 64.44. It was precisely this situation that the Armed Forces claimed they would bring to an end.

Table 6 presents the figures for the last three months of 1979. The monthly average in this period rose to 150 politically motivated assassinations. This was one of the statistics that motivated the majority of the members of the first Junta cabinet to state publicly that the government was moving to the right, that the more reactionary elements of the oligarchy were strengthening their influence and power within government and that — once again — the thesis of "reforms" with repression was being implemented (8).

In January of 1980 the Christian Democrat Party came to an agreement with the Armed Forces for the formation of a new government. It was from this moment on that there was a dramatic increase in the number of assassinations for political motives that can be attributed to the Security Forces. More people died in the first four months of 1980 than in the whole of 1979. (See *Table 7*).

In the first ten months of the year 1980, at least 6,450 Salvadoreans — men and women, young and old — died at the hands of the Security Forces or the paramilitary bodies linked to the Security Forces. If we include the victims of the massacres listed in *Table 7*, the total is 10,450. The monthly average for 1980 is 1,045 Salvadoreans assassinated by the Security Forces or paramilitary groups. If this average is maintained until the end of the year, a total of 12,540 Salvadoreans will have been assassinated by the Armed Forces. This is 17 times greater than the assassinations during the two years of government of General Romero.

If we assume that the population of El Salvador is 4,354,000 inhabitants (9), then this total of victims represents 0.3% of the population. *Table 8* presents what this percentage would imply comparatively in other countries of the world.

We know of no international agreement that defines what percentage of the population must be eliminated before we can properly speak of extermination. Nevertheless, the data we have presented clearly show a constant upward trend in the figures for politically motivated assassinations perpetrated by the regime. In absolute terms, the figures are far in excess of those for which the community of American nations was considering the introduction of sanctions against the government of General Romero.

8) "Renuncia de Algunos Ministros y Subsecretarios de Estado", ECA, Year XXXV, No. 375/376 (Jan/Feb 1980 120-121).

9) DEGESTYC. EL SALVADOR EN CIFRAS, 1979. San Salvador Ministerio de Economía, 1979 p.22.

Table 6

POLITICALLY MOTIVATED ASSASSINATIONS CARRIED OUT BY SECURITY FORCES BETWEEN OCTOBER AND DECEMBER 1979

PROFESSION	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	TOTAL OCT-DEC	TOTAL 1979	(1) / (2)
Campeſino	39	1	154	194	373	52.0%
Workers	16	4	29	49	129	38.0%
Students	9	2	18	29	94	30.0%
Teachers	-	-	-	-	33	0.0%
Professionals	1	1	-	2	11	18.2%
Religious	-	-	-	-	3	0.0%
Unknown	94	2	80	176	387	45.0%
TOTALS	159	10	281	450	1030	44.0%

Source : Social communication secretariate of the Archbishopric. OP. CIT.

Table 7

POLITICALLY MOTIVATED ASSASSINATIONS CARRIED OUT BY THE SECURITY FORCES BETWEEN JANUARY 1st AND OCTOBER 24th 1980 a/

PROFESSION	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	TOTAL
Campeſino	129	126	203	198	200	393	524	236	378	338	2.725
Workers	10	9	32	30	53	87	52	55	104	106	538
Students	4	22	47	61	14	98	52	77	59	106	540
Teachers	8	6	3	12	21	9	7	4	9	9	88
Professionals	2	4	7	-	17	11	8	6	-	38	93
Religious	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	4
Unknown	115	69	195	179	306	429	403	327	275	164	2.462
TOTALS	268	236	488	480	611	1028	1047	705	825	762	6.450
					b/					c/	

a/ SOURCES : from January to May, Socorro Jurídico del Arzobispado "Asasinos por motivos políticos desde el 1 de enero hasta el 24 de octubre de 1980". (mimeo)

from June to August, CUDI, Balance Estadístico, Año 1, No. 2 (August 1980).

for September, CUDI, "Estadísticas Provisionales para el mes de septiembre" (mimeo).

for October, Socorro Jurídico del Arzobispado de San Salvador, OP. CIT., and Boletín Semanal SOLIDARIDAD (Nov 1st 1980) mimeo.

b/ Victims of the massacres in Río Sumpul and El Trifinio (Department of Chalatenango) and in San Vicente are not included. Approximate figures only are available. according to the

Archdiocese of Santa Rosa de Copán, approximately 600 were massacred in the Río Sumpul operation. Victims in El Trifinio and San Vicente amounted to some 400.

c/ Victims of the military operations in Morazán and San Vicente are not included. According to Medical AID International and Children's AID Latin America, some 3000 people died in Morazán. The national press spoke of some 40,000 refugees in the area. Figures for San Vicente are not available.

Table 8

COMPARATIVE FIGURES OF 0,3% OF THE POPULATION OF SELECTED COUNTRIES

COUNTRY	POPULATION a/	0,3%
USA	217.000.000	651.000
FRG	61.440.000	184.320
SPAIN	36.448.500	109.345
NETHERLANDS	13.850.000	41.550
VENEZUELA	12.737.000	38.211
DENMARK	5.090.000	15.270
COSTA RICA	2.044.237	6.132

Source : Almanaque Mundial 1979. Panamá : Editora América, S.A. 1979

a/All population data for the year 1977

B. Qualitative aspects

The figures in *Tables 5, 6 and 7* show that, qualitatively, the assassinations have been carried out against a very specific group of the population of El Salvador. In terms of profession or occupation, the bulk of the victims have been campesinos, workers and students. These three groups account for 58.9% of all assassinations in 1980. In terms of those victims whose occupation is known, campesinos represent 68.3% of the victims, workers 13.5% and students 13.5% (See *Table 9*).

Table 7 also shows significant increases in the number of workers/employees and students assassinated in the months of June-July and August-September 1980. These months coincided with the strikes and stoppages called by the Coordinadora Revolucionaria de Masas and the Frente Democrático Revolucionario respectively. During the stoppages the centre of political activity moved to the urban areas. It was precisely those professions whose activity is centred in the urban areas that suffered significant increases in the number of assassinations during these months.

The same is true of the number of professionals assassinated. The number increased significantly in May, a few weeks after the formation of the Frente Democrático and the Frente Democrático Revolucionario (FRD). Equally significant is the dramatic increase in the month of October, following shortly after the occupation of the Headquarters of the OAS by members of the FDR.

Full statistics are not available for the distribution by age of those assassinated. However, of the 2,780 deaths registered in the months of June to August, the age is known for 1,102 and of these 731 (66.3%) belong to the age group 16 to 30. (See *Table 10*).

What do all these people have in common ? Obviously, neither ethnic, racial nor religious characteristics. It is far more plausible that what they shared in common was their organized and

militant (real or supposed) opposition to the regime. The vast majority of the workers assassinated were either trade union leaders or trade union members. The vast majority of teachers assassinated were members of the Teachers' Association (Andes 21 de Junio). It is public knowledge that this association is affiliated to the Bloque Popular Revolucionario, one of the popular organizations in El Salvador. Many of the victims were killed while taking part in political demonstrations to protest publicly against the policies of the present Junta, demonstrations that were attacked and dispersed on setting out.

A large number of the campesino victims were killed while taking part in occupations of *haciendas* to demand better wages. To end these occupations, the Army and Security Forces mounted military operations resulting in bloodshed. To these operations must be added full-scale "combing" of large areas under the name of "clean-up operations", supposedly carried out against guerrilla groups. More recently, artillery and aircraft have been introduced in indiscriminate bombing attacks against vast areas of the countryside in a campaign that increasingly takes on characteristics of sophisticated and merciless counter-insurgency activity.

We cannot but conclude that the principal characteristic the victims of the repression share in common is their opposition — real or apparent — to the regime. The government Junta seems determined to exterminate all opposition, and to judge from the ever-increasing number of political assassinations, the opposition is not as minute as the government claimed in its initial declaration, nor does it show any tendency to decrease. On the contrary, the opposition is increasingly powerful. And precisely as its power has increased, so the government policy of repression and annihilation has become indiscriminate. Indiscriminate bombing of rural areas has taken the place of spot-checks and combing operations, and "definitive military action" has replaced the "clean-up operations" (10). The extermination of the Salvadorean people by the Military-Christian Democrat Junta is both systematic and on an ever increasing scale.

Table 9

**ABSOLUTE AND PERCENTAGE TOTALS OF POLITICALLY MOTIVATED
ASSASSINATIONS CARRIED OUT BY THE SECURITY FORCES :
1978 - OCTOBER 1980**

PROFESSION	1978		1979		JAN-OCT 1980		TOTALS	
	ABS	%	ABS	%	ABS	%	ABS	%
Campesino	83	56.5	373	36.2	2725	42.2	3181	41.7
Workers	12	8.2	129	12.5	538	8.3	679	8.9
Students	2	1.4	94	9.1	540	8.4	636	8.3
Teachers	4	2.7	33	3.2	88	1.4	125	1.6
Professional	-	0.0	11	1.1	93	1.4	104	1.4
Religious	1	0.7	3	0.3	4	0.1	8	0.1
Unknown	45	30.6	387	37.6	2462	38.2	2894	37.9
TOTALS	147	100.0	1030	100.0	6450	100.0	7627	100.0

10) Statement of Dr. José Morales Ehrlich. *DIARIO EL MUNDO*, 14th of November 1980, p.4.

Table 10

POLITICALLY MOTIVATED ASSASSINATIONS CARRIED OUT BY THE SECURITY FORCES. JUNE-JULY-AUGUST 1980 : BY AGE

AGE	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	TOTALS
0-10	9	26	5	40
11-15	23	30	26	75
16-20	112	127	83	322
21-25	94	83	76	253
26-30	68	53	35	156
31-35	31	32	22	85
36-40	25	18	12	55
40-	46	44	26	116
Unknown	620	634	424	1678

Source : CUDI Balance Estadístico, Año 1, No. 2, August 1980

3. EVIDENCE OF INTENTIONALITY : EXISTENCE OF A PLAN

A first argument that confirms the systematic extermination to be intentional is the very scale on which it is practiced and the ease with which we can identify the groups against which it is directed. The assassination — with total impunity — of 10,450 people, all of whom are clearly identifiable within a particular pole of the political spectrum, cannot be merely casual.

But we would like to go into detail on two fundamental aspects. First the *plan* of extermination in which intentionality can be clearly identified, and secondly the attempt to *legitimize* this plan and to *justify* this policy of genocide. The two aspects are closely linked but both can be observed in time, identified in practice and analyzed in the political statements of the regime.

By *plan of extermination* we understand a plan in which :

- a development through time can be plotted, leading to the achievement of the predetermined objective which is no other than the total annihilation of the political opposition;
- it is possible to identify those juridical and political instruments as well as an apparatus of extermination which are necessary to achieve the objective;
- it is possible to observe the interplay of these various instruments in concrete policies or to identify policies aimed at making these instruments more effective;
- it is possible to establish individual and institutional responsibilities for the execution or the legitimization of the plan.

A careful study of *Table 7* leads us to distinguish five moments in time in which these four dimensions of the plan can be historically and objectively identified.

A. First stage : the transition

The first moment is from 6 January 1980 (date on which the Armed Forces accepted the

minimum programme of government presented by the Christian Democrat Party) and 3 March 1980 (date on which Héctor Dada Hirezi resigned from the Junta).

During this period the efforts of the Junta were concentrated on the nomination of a Cabinet. Politically the Junta was weak and scarcely legitimized. The resignation of a large number of government officials of the first Junta caused a crisis, which was minimized, and the new government had to act with great caution.

The number of political assassinations was similar to that of December 1979, though new forms of repression were introduced. Previously, public meetings of the political opposition were dispersed by Security Forces; now it is paramilitary forces that were responsible for attacking public meetings and the Security Forces were responsible for closing off possible lines of escape. Such was the case of the attack on the massive "Unity Demonstration" organized by the recently created *Coordinadora Revolucionaria de Masas* (CRM) on 22 January 1980, and the subsequent attacks on demonstrators in their search for refuge in the Church of the Holy Rosary and in the campus of the National University (11). Military solutions to labour disputes and other pacific forms of protest became common-place (12); road-blocks were introduced on principal highways; paramilitary groups operated with relative impunity, eliminating not only the leaders of the popular organizations but also those people identified with the initial proposals of the military and Christian Democrat Party, but who refused to accept successive stages of the plan. Such is the case of the assassination of Mario Zamora Rivas (13).

The *Comité Permanente de la Fuerza Armada* (COPEFA) was charged with the responsibility of guaranteeing the faithful application — in letter and spirit — of the Declaration of the Armed Forces, but even this committee was neutralized when nearly all its original members were changed. Within the Armed Forces the extreme right-wing faction maintains a parallel chain of command, free from any outside control and whose decisions at times appear to take precedence over those of the Junta. It is this faction, in close alliance with certain members of the Junta, that maintain a permanent threat of coup d'état. It also appears to control the activities of the paramilitary groups (14).

Juridical developments included the proclamation by decree of the Constitutional Statute which ratified the Political Constitution of 1962 as the juridical base for the *Estado de Derecho*, always providing that the terms of that Constitution are not opposed to or interfere with the legal dispositions necessary to implement the "reforms" foreseen in the new political plan.

Throughout this period, though with ever decreasing enthusiasm, the Junta maintained a policy of recognition of the popular political organizations and showed willingness to negotiate with them. The press, radio and television continued to publish the opinions of the opposition, though always in the form of advertising. Both the Christian Democrat Party (CDP) and the American Embassy showed apparent hostility to the private business sector. The CDP gave public assurances that they would resign from government unless the intensity of the repression eased and unless the relevant investigations were opened to determine responsibilities arising from the abuse of public office.

11) See Escobar, Francisco Andrés, "En la línea de la muerte", ECA, Year XXXV No. 315/316 (Jan/Feb 1980) p.21

12) Security Forces even assaulted the headquarters of the Christian Democrat Party (occupied by the *Ligas Populares* on the 28th of February) against the express orders of the Junta.

13) In her letter of resignation to the Christian Democrat Party the widow of Dr. Zamora Rivas was to implicate certain members of the Party in the death of her husband. See "Carta de Renuncia de Aronnette Zamora" in ECA, Year XXXV. No. 381/382 (July/August, 1980), p.112.

14) This seems to have been expressed in the letter of resignation of Héctor Dada Hirezi, as well as the subsequent resignations from the party of a significant number of its more progressive elements. See ECA, Year XXXV, No. 377/378 (March/April 1980), pp.376ff.

Towards the end of this period appearances began to weaken. Mgr. Romero warned publicly on the mis-use of force by Public Order Units and uncovered the real aims of the new political agreement. The resignation of Héctor Dada served to confirm the warning of Mgr. Romero. The exclusion of Héctor Dada from the Junta allowed the following stage of the plan of extermination to be put into operation.

B. Second stage : the mask of reform

Three days after the resignation of Dada Hirezi was publicly confirmed, three decrees were put into effect : the Agrarian Reform, the Nationalization of the Banks and the State of Siege throughout the country. This date marks the beginning of the second stage which was to continue until the beginning of May 1980, with the arrest of Major Roberto D'Abuissou, public spokesman and visible leader of the Frente Amplio Nacionalista.

The State of Siege marked the beginning of unprecedented repression. In the month of March alone, the number of victims was almost the same as for the previous two months together. One of the victims was Mgr. Romero, who before his death denounced both the scale of the repression and the political will of the Junta to make effective its policy of extermination under the guise of reforms. He also warned of the possibility of U.S. intervention. By way of example we can cite the following information, all of which is public knowledge : the Junta requested from the government of Carter "non-lethal military equipment" in the value of U.S. \$ 5.7 million; Mr. Roy Prosterman, advisor for the Agrarian Reform, was advisor also for the Agrarian Reform of the Saigon regime in South Vietnam; AIFLD, well known for its links with the CIA, provided a team of technical advisors for the Agrarian Reform programme.

In addition to the juridical instruments referred to at the beginning of this section, the Armed Forces introduced an Anti-Arms Decree. Under the pretext of the need to disarm the civil population as a necessary step in the pacification programme, road-blocks and house-to-house searches were introduced in urban areas on a massive scale.

New forms of repression were introduced. Daily, and in the most varied places in the Republic (on the highways, in the capital, in the rivers), corpses, mutilated and tortured, began to appear. Those under arrest for political motives began to disappear. Their mutilated bodies appearing a few days after their disappearance. The "Death Squad" began to operate first in Santa Ana, later in San Salvador and soon throughout the Republic. Victims who managed to survive were killed in the Health Centres where they were recuperating. Medical and para-medical personnel, as well as other health service employees were assassinated.

In political terms, the State of Siege brought with it censorship of the press, thus ending the ideological debates which had been carried on previously through advertising. By the end of this period, the only three dissident voices were YSAX (the radio station of the Archbishopric), Diario La Crónica and Diario El Independiente. The Press Committee of the Armed Forces was created (COPREFA) whose mission is to supply mis-information and to distort what is happening in the country.

Following the events in the Cathedral on the occasion of the funeral of Mgr. Romero, all radio stations in the country were linked to a national chain. The regime, as also the American Embassy, put the blame on the opposition. The American Ambassador appeared to exercise an ever-growing influence on the government.

Within the government all opposition to the plan of extermination was silenced or eliminated. Three key advisors to Coronel Majano died in a mysterious air accident. Coronel Majano himself was accused of being a member of the Communist Party. There was an attempt to murder Captain Mena Sandoval, one of the leaders of the October coup.

The end of this period brought with it the order of arrest against Major Roberto D'Abuissou. This was an act of desperation that was to demonstrate the total impotence of the progressive factions within the Armed Forces to obstruct the policy of genocide. The arrest of D'Abuissou was

the occasion of a head-on clash between the different factions within the Junta and Armed Forces, and marked the beginning of the third stage.

C. Third stage : the mask slips off

This stage began with the appointment of Coronel Jaime Abdul Gutiérrez as Administrator of the Armed Forces (early May 1980) and ended with the military intervention in the National University (26 June). It is in this period above all that the true intentions of the Junta were unmasked, intentions hidden behind the various reform programmes. It is in this period that the Junta declared, in practice, its policy of extermination against the Salvadorean people. In the sixty days that make up this third stage, more than 2,500 Salvadoreans are tortured, assassinated or massacred.

The massacres were on a large scale and were carried out by the Salvadorean Armed Forces, with the collaboration of the Armed Forces of Guatemala and Honduras.

The paramilitary groups were put under a single command, using the name Ejército Secreto Salvadoreño (ESS), though this did not prevent the proliferation of new exterminating groups. According to an internal report of the US State Department, the improved efficiency and adaptability of these groups was achieved through the direct participation of North American advisors who not only created the conditions for their unification under a single command, but also hope to achieve closer cooperation with their counterpart groups in Guatemala and Honduras (15).

In qualitative terms, *the reign of terror* would appear to be the most distinctive characteristic of this period. The cruelty of the tortures practiced against the victims of the repression had no precedent in the previous stages. The corpses appeared scalped, be-headed, with throats cut and dismembered. The heads of the decapitated began to appear hung from trees or impaled on fences.

In addition to the paramilitary based repression, large-scale military operations were mounted in the north and central-east regions of the country. Massacres included that of women and children fleeing from the country to seek refuge in Honduras. In the towns, members of the teaching profession and students, health employees and the church were the victims of repression without mercy at the hands of the Armed Forces. Educational centres were constantly searched; the two principal universities were victim to repeated armed intervention; convents, catholic schools and health centres were constantly checked. In the month of May alone, 21 teachers were assassinated.

But the opposition continued to gain strength and the regime threatened to impose a State of Emergency. Reforms in the Penal Code were introduced, whereby the non-violent occupation of public institutions was typified as subversion. Radio, television and the press were manipulated to justify planned future acts of repression (16).

All evidence indicates that this increase in the level of repression coincides with the appointment of Coronel Gutiérrez as Administrator of the Armed Forces. Within a few days of his appointment, Major D'Abuissou was set at liberty. The large scale operations in Trifinio, Sumpul and San Vicente took place shortly after his trip to Guatemala, where he had discussions with his Guatemalan counterparts. Towards the end of this period there were public references to discussion and agreements with the Private Sector.

15) ESCATF/D, Department of State, "Dissident Paper on El Salvador and Central America" (mimeographed), 6 November 1980.

16) This is the case of the capture of Julián Ignacio Otero by the National Guard. After publicizing the charges of Mr. Otero, there began actions, military and paramilitary, against all persons and institutions which had been mentioned.

The Armed forces reacted with more vehemence than ever before in the face of the massive strikes organized by the Coordinador Revolucionaria de Masas (CRM) on the 24 and 25 June 1980. The National University was invaded and militarized and a "clean-up" operation (prelude of things to come in the following period) was mounted against the trade union leadership.

D. Fourth stage : towards fascism

The total success of the strikes called by the CRM signal the beginning of the fourth stage. In a series of juridical initiatives the regime sanctioned punitively the right to organize and to strike of public employees (Decree 296), and militarized those autonomous and semiautonomous entities considered to be strategic : the Autonomous Executive Docks Commission (CEPA), the commission that controls ports and airport; the National Sewage Association (ANDA), responsible for water supplies; the Hydroelectric Commission of Rio Lempa (CEL) that controls electricity supplies; and the National Association of Telecommunications (ANTEL) that controls telephones and international communications in general (Decree 43). This fourth stage was delimited by the promulgation of Decree 296 and Decree 43.

In the best tradition of the fascist era in Germany, the regime reacted violently against any attempt by the mass media to denounce or oppose the plan of genocide. In the early days of June, the offices of the newspaper *El Independiente* were attacked on three separate occasions; a bomb was placed in the Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas; the offices of the API news agency were searched and a photographer and editorial staff member of the newspaper *La Crónicas* were kidnapped, to appear horribly tortured and murdered two days later.

As soon as the mass media were under control, the Administration introduced a campaign to discredit people. A telephone number was made available on which people were encouraged to denounce "suspicious activities". It was not necessary for the person to identify him or herself, nor was it necessary to supply any kind of proof or evidence.

On the pretext of having received information on this telephone number, the Armed Forces initiated a series of controls and checks on those educational centres and church institutions which were denouncing the violation of human rights. The offices of the *Socorro Juridico* were searched in an attempt to destroy evidence which linked the National Guard with the paramilitary groups.

At this time, the paramilitary groups were able to carry out their activities with total impunity. Terrorist attacks were effected against the majority of trade union offices which were also the object of constant police checks. The large scale operations in the rural areas continued with ever increasing use of heavy artillery and helicopters. With the approval of the Armed Forces, Civil Guards — in practice additional execution squads — were formed.

The militarization of both city and country-side reached its peak during the strike on 13-15 August 1980. Although the number of assassinations in August showed a slight decrease (possibly because of the presence of large numbers of foreign journalists in the country to cover the strike), it was still in excess of 700, an average of almost 25 assassinations per day.

Increasing participation of the United States in the application and development of the government plan can be evidenced. According to the Internal Document of the State Department, at least 12 government agencies and an equal number of non-government agencies collaborated in the mass-media programme. Their activities included the following :

- Create an image of a moderate and reformist government.
- Create the image of United States support of large-scale, if moderate, reforms in El Salvador, as a means of limiting communist and extreme left-wing expansion.
- Establish links between Salvadorean and Guatemalan opposition guerilla groups and Cuba.

- Discredit the moderate spokesmen of the opposition as mere puppets of the hard-line guerilla leaders.
- Maintain a close control on the press coverage of events in El Salvador in the United States, to avoid a repeat of the publicity given to the opposition in Somoza's Nicaragua (17).

While insisting that the opposition has been defeated and has no option but terrorist activities, the Junta ordered the militarization of innumerable work centres and autonomous and semi-autonomous entities. Further adjustments were needed in the plan.

E. Fifth stage : total extermination

The militarization of the work centres at the end of August 1980 served as a lead-in to a "clean-up" operation within the Armed Forces to isolate the few remaining pockets of progressive thinking. The Military Order of September 1st marked the beginning of this stage, which was to last until end of October.

The moderate decrease in political assassination noted in the previous stage was replaced by a frightening escalation of repression. The Armed Forces announced publicly that the Air Force was to be used in counter-insurgency operations. Indiscriminate bombing attacks were reported, as well as the use of armoured cars, heavy artillery and armoured helicopters. "Definitive Military Operations" were mounted against guerilla strongholds, as in Morazán in the north-east of the country, where some 5000 troops of the Army and Security Forces were deployed. Several international organizations have denounced the death of at least 3000 civilians in that action (18).

The paramilitary groups continued their work of terrorizing the civilian population and of eliminating leaders and members of the popular organizations. The "Death Squad" reappeared with executions on a vast scale. There was even an attempt on the life of Colonel Majano, by now quite isolated within the Junta, following the ratification of the Military Order of September 1st by the civilian members of the Junta. Under this order, those army officers sympathetic to the position of Colonel Majano were relieved of troop command. The Colonel himself stated that the attempt against his life came from "high-up". The business community re-organized itself in a new front formed of well-known and long-standing associations. Aggressive, it appears to be the pace-maker for the government. The solutions it suggested were taken up by the government and presented as important conciliatory measures on the anniversary of the October Revolt.

Political options for the opposition were continually reduced. The control and silence of the press was such that the Frente Democrático Revolucionario took steps to call the attention of the public and international organizations to the state of affairs in El Salvador.

Towards the end of this period it became quite evident that the USA shares responsibility not only for the initial conception of the plan of "reforms" with genocide, but also for the technical and political assistance needed to put the plan into operation. Responsibility for the extermination falls on the shoulders of the Salvadorean Armed Forces and their paramilitary groups. It is the Salvadorean Christian Democrat Party and its main leaders, Napoleón Duarte and José Antonio Morales Ehrlich, that must bear the responsibility for legitimizing and justifying the plan.

17) ESCATF/D, *op.cit.*, pp. 8ff.

18) This is affirmed in a cable of the news agency DPA. The international organizations which denounced the massacre are "Medical Aid International" and "Children's Aid Latin America".

4. EVIDENCE OF INTENTIONALITY : LEGITIMIZING AND JUSTIFYING THE PLAN

The very nature and scale of the plan of extermination created the need to justify and legitimize it. The legitimization of the plan was based on several points : the alleged programme of reforms; the plan for economic recuperation; the pacification programme; the promise of negotiations and free elections, and the unconditional support given to the plan by foreign governments, especially the United States, Costa Rica and Venezuela. The justification of the plan depended on a mis-representation of the political positions of the opposition. The two are inter-dependent : the justification depends on the legitimization which in turn conditions the mis-interpretations and mis-representations that the government is to make.

A. Legitimation

It needs little reflection to realize that the principal purpose of the supposed reforms is to legitimize the plan of extermination. It can also be shown that there is little political will to introduce profound reforms.

Evidence for this can be found in the Internal Document of the State Department to which we referred earlier. The document lists some of the activities of the various US government and non-government agencies in El Salvador and says :

"Expanding the flow of resources and improving the administration of the agrarian reform programme so as to limit its impact on the traditional elites and increase its short-term benefits for the population" (...) (19)

Amongst other comments in the document on the situation in El Salvador we find :

"The Government Junta and the Armed Forces have failed completely in their attempt to gain popular support for their programmes of reforms and of counter-insurgency.

Land re-distribution has neither neutralized the campesino population nor isolated the guerillas". (...) (20)

A second aspect of legitimizing the plan is that of avoiding the international isolation of the Salvadorean regime. The US government has been the key instrument. In the same document to which we have referred, a whole series of activities is listed, aimed at "Improving and maintaining the international prestige and recognition of the Regime" : amongst these activities we find :

"Stimulate the contracting of moderate reformist Salvadorean personnel for diplomatic postings.

Logistic support and advice through US embassies and missions.

Actively stimulate the diplomatic support of sympathetic regimes in Latin America and of other allied governments.

Blocking resolutions and other diplomatic initiatives that are critical of the actual government or that may help to gain international recognition for the opposition.

Creating favourable conditions for other countries to intervene in the OAS and United Nations in support of US initiatives related to El Salvador". (...) (21)

19) ESCATF/D, *op.cit.*, p.6.

20) *Ibid.*, p.8.

21) *Ibid.*, p.7.

However the document concludes :

"Neither the Armed Forces nor the Government have been able to show the political will or capacity to avoid indiscriminate repression against the civilian population : this has contributed to a rapidly deteriorating image both nationally and internationally". (22)

B. Justification

We have seen that it was the United States that was responsible for legitimizing the plan to the international community, and the Government Junta, through the force of its reforms, responsible for legitimizing it nationally. But the responsibility for the *justification* of the plan of extermination has been in the hands principally of the Salvadorean Christian Democrat Party. In political debate and in their declarations to the mass media they have continuously and increasingly misrepresented the political nature of the opposition.

Each of the stages we have defined in the plan of extermination carries its particular definition of the political nature of the opposition, a definition that it prepared in each preceding stage. And each definition forewarns of the type of juridical, political and practical instruments which will be applied in the subsequent stage.

The transition : In their initial declarations, both the Junta and the leadership of the Christian Democrat Party recognized *de jure*, the existence of the political opposition and the possibility of negotiations with them.

This opposition to which they referred was the Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario (MNR) — the only political party *not* a member of the Coordinadora Revolucionaria de Masas. There was even an attempt to form a coalition government with the MNR. In this period, the former official party — Partido de Conciliación Nacional (PCN) — attempted to change its image, and was not in any real sense of the word an "opposition" party. But the Junta also wished to maintain a pluralist image and permitted a vigorous political debate through paid advertising in the mass media.

The existence of the popular organizations was recognized and the Junta considered that it should enter into discussions and negotiations with them. The popular organizations were carefully distinguished from the guerilla groups : in the political spectrum these latter groups are considered to represent the "extreme left" and are counterbalanced by FAN and the paramilitary groups who represent the "extreme right". Big business with its well-known guilds and associations (ANEP, ASI, the Cotton Cooperative etc) is identified with the extreme right. All these groups represent the opposition, but it is the opposition of the extreme right that the Christian Democrat Party as such identifies as the opposition "to be fought".

This is confirmed by two paid advertisements in January, one referring to the assassination of various party members in Chinamequita and the second stating the position of the Christian Democrat Party following the massacre of 22 January (23).

The mask of reform : During this second period, the opposition was divided, in the analysis of the Junta, into two extremes. The extreme left included both the guerilla organizations and, interestingly, the popular organizations. The extreme right continued to be defined as big business which the government was combating with its reform programme.

However in the declarations of the Junta, it was stated that the government had no alternative but to answer the violence of the left with the force of arms. The government reform programme was put forward as the cause of the left-wing violence in so far as it was undermining the base of

22) *Ibid.*, p.9.

23) Cf. "Documentación", in ECA, Year XXXV, No. 377/378 (March/April 1980), pp. 374-379, 396ff.

the left-wing groups. For the first time, the left-wing was branded as "lacking respect" for the population it was supposed to be fighting for. An example of this was the accusations made against the Coordinadora Revolucionaria de Masas by the Junta and the US Embassy, charging them with the massacre in the Cathedral during the burial service for Mgr. Romero. With this characterization of the extreme left as being a cause of the violence in the country, the extreme right appeared less and less as in opposition to the government, though still defined also as creators of violence. The frightening bloodshed of this period is attributed to the fratricidal struggle between the two extremes. The government presents itself as the mediator between the two groups.

The mask slips off : The manner in which the left-wing groups were defined during the second period prepared the way for the definition of them as subversive in this third stage. The creation of the Frente Democrático Revolucionario, to which many ex-members of the Christian Democrat Party belonged, obliged the Junta, at least during a brief period of time, to distinguish between an extreme left (FDR) and an ultra-extreme left (the guerilla groups). "Subversion" had to be invoked to justify the military interventions in the north and central regions of the country. The language of the political theorists of the Christian Democrat Party took on the same tone as the promoters of the doctrine of "National Security" under General Romero.

The escalation of the repression dictated by the plan of extermination was the reason for a massive campaign to denounce the intervention of foreign powers (especially Cuba and Nicaragua) in support of the subversion. With this, the possibility of an American "rescue operation" — an element introduced in the fourth stage — was guaranteed. The events in June 1980 during the strike called by the CRM paved the way for yet a further re-definition.

Towards fascism : Given that the Junta defines itself as "revolutionary" for the reforms it is introducing, groups that interfere with the economic activity of the country are necessarily "counter-revolutionary". The extreme left is now both "subversive and counter-revolutionary".

In the face of the total success of the June 1980 strike, the Government planned a mass-media campaign of mis-information both at home and abroad. There was a total block on news items related to the extermination campaigns that were by now under way. Information on the political assassinations of the Security Forces and paramilitary groups was also blocked. Publicity was given to "subversive acts", in which the extreme left was blamed for crimes committed by the regime. A campaign got under way to regain confidence in the "process of economic recuperation".

There was by now a total identification between Democracy and the Armed Forces. Ing. Napoleón Duarte and Dr. Morales Ehrlich become spokesmen for the policy of "National Security".

The publicity campaign prepared for the strike organized by the Frente Democrático Revolucionario for July 1980 but then called off, was to prepare the way for the definition of the August strike as a "failure" of the left, and in turn prepared the way for a yet further re-definition of the nature of the left.

Total extermination : In his triumphalistic speech following the strike in August 1980, Ing. Duarte described the left as "failures" and as such they had two options : accept the programme of the Junta or opt for terrorism.

The left, strengthened by the incorporation of increasing numbers of moderates, declined the invitation. During this fifth stage, the Junta and Christian Democrat Party defined the left first as terrorist and subsequently, as the contradictions within the regime became ever more apparent, as delinquent. The "subversive counter-revolutionaries" of the fourth stage were treated with the traditional measures of National Security Doctrine : the terrorists and delinquents of this fifth stage must be exterminated. "Definitive military campaigns" as in Morazan were planned and executed, and Dr. Morales Ehrlich announced on radio and television that any individual who takes part in terrorist activities of the Frente Democrático Revolucionario will suffer the full

consequences of the law.

It is interesting that at this moment in time, the FDR is made to appear as part of the terrorist group and, what is more, is made responsible for all the actions of the Dirección Revolucionaria Unificada (DRU-PM). The FDR is made out by the government to appear as the "brain" behind the terrorism.

At the end of the fourth period, the CDP and its civilian members of the Junta speak of the possibility of elections. The business community, through its associations, present a series of possible solutions to the country's problems, solutions that the government makes its own and presents as such on the occasion of the first anniversary of the October coup. By the end of this fifth period, unrest with the private sector is rife : the attempts against the life of Colonel Majano forewarn of further escalation in the level of repression as well as yet further re-definitions of the left-wing groups.

We should make it clear that "political opposition" is our own phrase. Despite the massacres, the military operations, the assassinations, the corpses that appear daily in highway and barranco, the regime continues to insist that the left has been defeated and that the only opposition is "a handful of terrorists and common criminals".

5. CONCLUSION

If we accept the definition of genocide as "the systematic extermination, total or partial, that a government carries out against a defined group for ethnic, racial or ideological motives", then we must conclude that the present regime in El Salvador is guilty of genocide.

It is genocide in that we are speaking of the systematic and intentional extermination of a particular section of the population. When in less than 10 months, the government has been responsible for more than 10,000 deaths. Independently of the other many violations of human rights, this must be qualified as genocide.

That this extermination is systematic and intentional is shown by the systematic persecution of the opposition : assassinations of trade union leaders and members, of leaders and members of campesino organizations, leaders and members of democratic groups, plus any civilian in any way suspected of supporting the popular movement.

That there are other sections of the population against which the government has taken no measures whatsoever, helps to define even more clearly the group that is object of genocide and to identify it as the opposition to the government. By the same measure, it helps to identify those sections of the population that are collaborating in genocide.

That the extermination is intentional is shown by the instruments the regime has created to increase its efficiency in extermination, and by the supportive political actions adopted. Special reference must be made to the campaign of mis-information through a tight control of the mass media, as well as the intransigent persecution of dissidents and the tendency increasingly to militarize civilian life.

Should any doubt remain, the documents we have quoted show the detailed planning of the policy of extermination and allow us to establish responsibilities. The US, under the pretext of protecting the Western world from communism, intervene to promote and advise on the plan. The principal authors of the extermination are the Salvadorean Armed Forces in conjunction with the paramilitary groups. Distinctions related to the different tendencies within the Armed Forces are irrelevant in this context. The Armed Forces as an institution are backing the plan of extermination : individual dissent will not change this. Given the nature of the plan, it is well within the realm of the possible that those military who disagree with the fundamental aims of the plan will themselves become victims of the policy of extermination.

Finally, the Christian Democrat Party must bear responsibility as accomplices of the US and the Salvadorean Armed Forces : it is they who have helped to justify and legitimize the plan, putting their prestige, or what is left of it, and political "know-how" at the service of the plan. It is they who prepared the propaganda that covered up the true intentions of the Junta. They are the mask on the face of the executioner of the Salvadorean people.

For much less that all this, the Organization of American States was on the point of condemning and introducing sanctions against the regime of General Romero. If El Salvador has ever required the intervention of the international community, it is now that it demands of the community of nations decisive intervention to put an end to this genocide.

III. THE RIGHT TO LEGITIMATE DEFENCE

In faithfulness to the Gospel message of truth and justice and to the memory of Mgr. Oscar Arnulfo Romero who always instilled in us the need for unconditional commitment to the cause of the human rights of the poor and oppressed in El Salvador, the *Socorro Juridico del Arzobispado* presents its point of view on the imposition of José Napoleon Duarte and Jaime Abdul Gutiérrez as president and vice-president designate of El Salvador.

The *Socorro Juridico del Arzobispado*, to Christians in El Salvador, the American continent and the world, to all democratic governments, to governmental and non-governmental human rights agencies, to all people of good will :

1. ANTECEDENTS

On the occasion of the military coup d'etat of 15 October 1979 which overthrew General Carlos Romero, the *Socorro Juridico* and Mgr. Romero issued the following statement on 22 October : "For the new government to gain credibility, it must clarify the very delicate matter of the political prisoners who have disappeared under previous governments, pay compensation to the families of the victims and punish those military who are found guilty of such repugnant crimes". On that same occasion, in a prophetic tone, Mgr. Romero added : "The Church is under no obligation to give its seal of approval to the new government. The Church of this Archdiocese stands with the people, as our actions can prove. If the people support the government it is our obligation to accompany the people".

Within three months, the new government proved itself to be essentially a repressive government : 370 people and 213 political prisoners who disappeared without trace.

In December 1979, all the civilian members of the government resigned, lest their presence in government be seen as justification for the repression.

On 20 March 1980, in a declaration entitled, "ANTE LA ESCALADA REPRESIVA QUE SUFRE EL PUEBLO SALVADOREÑO : ALTO A LA REPRESION", the Catholic University, the Independent Association of Technicians and Professionals in El Salvador and *Socorro Juridico* stated : "... at the beginning of January 1980, when the Christian Democrat Party was the sole remaining source of support for a plan which while promising 'profound economic reforms' was preparing the ground for the destruction of the popular organizations, organizations which quite arbitrarily were accused of being extremist and subversive. The Christian Democrat Party was to be responsible for the political aspects of the reform and the Armed Forces responsible for the destruction, by force, of the popular organizations. This reform would be supported and promoted by Venezuela and the U.S.A., especially the latter". From 1 January to 20 March 1980, 700 people had been assassinated.

The document adds : "For these reasons it is crucial to make clear that the repressive activity of the government, taken as a whole, represents a *new plan of action*, which includes repression and reforms, with priority given to repression; hence the very serious responsibility of the Christian Democrat Party, the USA, Venezuela and other countries. Under the façade of structural reforms, the people of El Salvador are being massacred to a degree and with cruelty unparalleled in the worst moments of Colonel Molina and General Romero". The document continues : "... many important and valuable members of the Christian Democrat Party have been obliged to resign, for reasons of conscience, from both government and party. Such is the case of Ing. Héctor Dada, ex-member of the Government and of eight prominent members of the

executive committee. The presence in power of the Christian Democrat Party, more apparent than real as evidenced by the members who have resigned, is supporting the systematic, ongoing and barbaric violation of human rights, especially the right to life. The world should know these facts. A masquerade of democratic reform is being used to massacre El Salvador's finest sons. This plan of reform is linked with the strategic, economic and political interests of the United States..."

On 27 November 1980, members of the Security Forces of the Salvadorean army, in support of plainclothes officers, kidnapped in our offices six high-ranking leaders of the Frente Democratico Revolucionario of El Salvador. Subsequently they were tortured and murdered. The Frente Democrático Revolucionario is the most important opposition group ever created in the political history of our country. On 28 November, Fr. Marcial Serrano, a catholic priest, was kidnapped by the National Guard. His corpse lies at the bottom of Lake Ilopango. Another Catholic priest was kidnapped on 23 November 1980. He is still missing. Four Christians from the United States, Ita Ford, Maura Clarke and Dorothy Kazelm (nuns) and Jean Donovan (secular missionary) were savagely murdered on 2 December 1980. Even the US Government that has supported so heavily with arms and money the present Salvadorean regime, acknowledged that members of the Security Forces had participated in these crimes. The Archbishop of San Salvador laid the responsibility quite clearly on the Government Junta, to which belong Napoleon Duarte and Abdul Gutiérrez.

Since the 1 January 1980, when the Salvadorean Army and various civilian opportunists of the Christian Democrat Party (among them Napoleon Duarte) made a pact on the blood of the Salvadorean people, at least TEN THOUSAND Salvadoreans have been assassinated by the Armed Forces in the worst orgy of blood and death that the country remembers since 1932. Even those members of the Christian Democrat Party who within the party opposed this bloody scheme were eliminated by their fellow party members with the aid of the Armed Forces. Such was the case of Dr. Mario Zamora Rivas, a member of the National Executive Committee. Social Christian mayors who denounced the atrocities of the regime were also assassinated.

The prophetic voice of Mgr. Romero proved unacceptable to the Salvadorean Army, to its allies within the national oligarchy and the US Government, and to individuals such as Napoleon Duarte. Mgr. Oscar Romero too was murdered. "The light shone in the darkness and the darkness could not comprehend it".

It is this repression in El Salvador — a repression that with its thousands of victims is more extended and cruel than ever before in the history of the country — that is the yardstick of judgement, the basic political fact that beyond any shadow of doubt betrays both the true nature of the present regime headed by Duarte and Gutiérrez and the ultimate aims of their policies.

2. IMPOSITION OF NAPOLEON DUARTE AND ABDUL GUTIERREZ

In the present socio-political context in which the most important, popular, democratic opposition movement in the history of the country grows from strength to strength, the regime in El Salvador is totally disintegrated.

All the propaganda which the Junta and the State Department have distributed internationally (the so-called "Peace Treaty" between El Salvador and Honduras) are the lies that have been the bed-fellows of the reign of terror in El Salvador.

The manner in which information has been manipulated to give the opposite impression to the truth has verged on the unbelievable and is certainly without precedent in previous regimes.

The forces of evil, national and international, are interested in prolonging the reign of terror and the martyrdom of a nation, but have been forced to retreat in the face of a popular democratic alternative, albeit under siege in El Salvador, and viewed with prejudice internationally.

It is in this context that a decimated Christian Democrat Party, reduced to the image of Duarte and staining with blood the international principles of Social Christianity, makes a pact with an army known the world over for its criminal acts, worse even than the National Guard of Somoza; under this pact, it is agreed to appoint two personalities fully identified with the repression. With these appointments it is planned to intensify political repression as the last resort of a despairing dictatorship in the face of the imminent triumph of the Salvadorean people.

- In the light of the above, the *Socorro Juridico del Arzobispado* is morally obliged to declare :
- A. That following the resolution of the United Nations which condemns "the grave violation of human rights", it be clarified to the international community that the conflict in El Salvador has never had its roots in a supposed war between "extremist political factions", an analysis promoted by the US State Department. The immediate cause of the conflict is the war that has been declared against the Salvadorean people by the Salvadorean military dictatorship, its national and international allies, and with the support of the eight remaining members of a Party opposed to the people and reduced to personalistic opportunism.
 - B. That with the imposition of Napoleon Duarte and Abdul Gutiérrez as President and Vice-President respectively of the Republic, NO NEW GOVERNMENT IS CREATED. The military structures remain intact and the displacement of Colonel Adolfo Majano and of the progressive military officers can only lead to an increase in the repression against the Salvadorean Church and people. Those who previously were responsible for the repression *now have full control of the government.*
 - C. That the creation of the Military Junta minimized the possibilities of dialogue. In our judgement it is quite beyond belief that at the present moment the government is calling for dialogue with the opposition while the obstacles to dialogue have not been eliminated :
 - a) No clarification has been made of the capture and subsequent disappearance of individuals for political reasons under the present regime. What is more, in the one year 1980 the total of 213 people who disappeared during the fourteen years of Sanchez, Molina and Romero has been doubled. Since 1 January 1980, 380 people have been kidnapped without trace by the Junta.
 - b) Those military responsible for the repression have not been brought to justice : repression that includes murder, torture and military invasions without respect for the neutrality of refuge and hospitals. Even those military who were suspect of the murder of Mgr. Romero have been placed at liberty, as in the case of Major Roberto D'Aubisson. Others are members or advisors of the Junta. We can recall the prophetic words of Mgr. Romero when he publicly challenged Colonel José Guillermo Garcia to resign because of his responsibilities in the repression.
 - C. No investigation has been made of the persecution of the church. Six priests and four nuns have been murdered. The Armed Forces have been responsible in most cases. Foreign military personnel have also intervened.
 - D. That the present regime headed by Napoleon Duarte and Abdul Gutiérrez does not represent any sector of the Salvadorean people. When Duarte acknowledged that he had reached the Presidency "with the mandate of the Armed Forces and the Party", he was recognizing that he had no popular support. With these words he was accepting to maintain himself in power by force of arms, given that what he calls "party" is a group of eight people (Napoleon Duarte, Antonio Morales Erlich, Fidel Chavez Mena, Ovidio Hernandez, Adolfo Rey Prendes, Julio Samayoa, David Trejos and Roberto Viera).
 - E. That the first among the fundamental human rights is the right to life. When this right is threatened and trampled upon, there remains for the person attacked the ultimate recourse of legitimate self-defence. The people of El Salvador, savagely attacked throughout 1980 as the report of the United Nations recognizes, has the right to take up this option of legitimate self-defence.

The Church, in the "very exceptional cases of evident, prolonged tyranny, which gravely attacks the fundamental rights of the person and dangerously undermines the common good of the nation", refers to the *legitimacy of an insurrection* as the last recourse in the defence of the people.

3. APPEAL TO CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT ORGANIZATIONS OF THE WORLD

The *Socorro Juridico del Arzobispado* judges the moment propitious to make a plea to all the Christian Democrat organizations in Europe and Latin America. The present eight members of the Christian Democrat Party in El Salvador have stained themselves by their toleration of terror and lies. By acting in the name of the Christian Democrat movement, they are staining with blood the principles of Social Christianity. Their attitude can be explained only by blind hatred of the majority opposition movement or by uncontrolled ambition for power.

Sooner or later history will judge this group of Christian Democrats and those governments in Latin America which have supported them. History will judge them for having given political respectability to the worst massacre, the most cruel repression, the most recent genocide in the American continent. These eight people, infamous for their complicity in the reign of terror, have no influence within the government but are the cover-up for those who stain with blood the soil of El Salvador.

The *Socorro Juridico del Arzobispado* makes this plea to the Christian Democrat institutions in Europe and Latin America, that they do not allow themselves to be convinced by the residue of a party that has distanced itself from the people to become the friend of the executioners of the people. This residue is giving political support to those military responsible for the systematic massacre of the Salvadorean people.

In the name of the thousands of Christians who have been assassinated, we ask you to disown and refuse any further help to the present government in El Salvador.

4. APPEAL TO THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE WORLD

WE URGE all governments to respect the resolution of the United Nations that no arms or other form of military assistance be supplied to the Government of El Salvador.

We ask the Christian people of the United States to be the guarantor that their Government does not provide any kind of assistance, military or economic, to those whom they have protected until now.

5. APPEAL TO CHRISTIANS AND ALL PEOPLE OF GOOD WILL THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

Finally, the *Socorro Juridico del Arzobispado* calls on all Christians and men of good will throughout the world to identify in solidarity with the just cause of the people of El Salvador.

The society that generates injustice and sin must be destroyed at root and the homicidal hatred with which it is planned to maintain this situation must also be faced up to. At the hour of victory we will understand that the blood of so many Christians has been the seed of freedom. With Mgr. Oscar Arnulfo Romero we can say, "My wish is to remain on earth, in community with those fighting together for freedom. I cannot enjoy pleasures and I have no wish to rest while there are people to be liberated".

SOCORRO JURIDICO DEL ARZOBISPADO
San Salvador, 15 December 1980.

APPENDICES

1. WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON EL SALVADOR

The following text was adopted by the WCC Executive Committee at its meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, 9-13 February 1981 :

STATEMENT ON EL SALVADOR

1. The Central Committee of the WCC in August 1980 viewed with great concern "the increasing escalation of repression and violence in Central America, and particularly in El Salvador". We reaffirm its statement with force, and especially where it "calls upon the military authorities of the Government of El Salvador immediately to cease all repressive activity; affirms its full spiritual, moral, material and economic support to the churches in El Salvador; reiterates the deepest solidarity with the suffering and demands of the people; appeals to nations to abstain from interfering in the internal affairs of El Salvador; and draws attention of the member churches of the WCC to the Resolution of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA which calls on the United States Government to halt all assistance to the military and police of El Salvador".

(Full text of the Statement follows)

2. We have followed with profound concern the development of events since then. We deplore in particular the severe attacks upon the clergy and lay people of the churches in El Salvador as they carry out courageous and exemplary ministries of pastoral and prophetic solidarity with the population.
3. We deplore the fact that direct military assistance to El Salvador, from various sources, has increased violence and repression and delayed the search for peace. We urgently appeal that such interference cease, and call on our member churches to press for a respect for the dignity, integrity and resolve of the El Salvadorean people to determine their own future. We view with particular alarm recent reports that the United States Government has increased military, economic and political support to the El Salvadorean military authorities.
4. We express our deep sense of community with our sisters and brothers in El Salvador, who are representative of the churches and people of that country in the suffering which they endure and in the struggle they have made their own.
5. We call upon our sister churches and communities in Latin America, nationally and regionally, to join with us in engaging in intercessory prayer, action and support on behalf of the El Salvadorean people. We join with the Latin American Council of Churches (in formation), in its recent letter to the Christian Churches in Salvador that "we are convinced that the God whom we worship and serve is the Lord of history" and "that as Christians we are called to be members of the same body".
6. We urge the member churches of the WCC to strengthen and accelerate their ecumenical support for the concrete efforts being undertaken for alleviating the suffering in El Salvador, and in particular to support the CICARWS appeal of January 1981, and forcefully to bring to bear effective pressure to end the repression in that country.
7. Finally, as we approach the first anniversary of the martyrdom of the revered pastor and Archbishop of San Salvador, Monseñor Oscar Arnulfo Romero, we echo words of his successor, Bishop Arturo Rivera Damas, as we pray that the people of El Salvador may hold to their faith and to their struggle for a more just and fraternal society, in which there will be true peace, in which fear and terror will give way to fellowship and joy.

2. WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES CENTRAL COMMITTEE STATEMENT ON EL SALVADOR

The following text was adopted by the WCC Central Committee at its meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, 14-22 August 1980:

STATEMENT ON EL SALVADOR

The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches views with great concern the increasing escalation of repression and violence in Central America, and particularly in El Salvador. Directed for the most part against peasants, workers, intellectuals, civic and political leaders, their popular organizations and the churches, the official harassment, abductions and detention of persons, and other violations of fundamental human rights, have raised strong expressions of protest in El Salvador, in the region and throughout the world.

The Central Committee mourns the assassination of the revered Archbishop, Monseñor Oscar Arnulfo Romero whose martyrdom is a witness to the power of the crucified Christ and a sign of solidarity with the oppressed. It expresses its solidarity with the churches in El Salvador; it notes with alarm the increasing threats against the churches in their efforts to protect and assist the many thousands of peasants sheltered in refuges, the massacre of innocent families attempting to flee the country and the attempts of security forces to curtail the work of the churches' legal assistance to victims. It expresses its deep concern over the fate of the disappeared, such as the General Secretary of the Salvadorean Student Christian Movement, José Guillermo Castro.

The Central Committee therefore:

1. Calls upon the military authorities of the Government of El Salvador immediately to cease all repressive activity in the country, carried out against the people, against their organizations and the Church.
2. Affirms its full spiritual, moral, material and economic support to the churches in El Salvador, in the accomplishment of their tasks of solidarity with the people of that country, in their witness to the Gospel and in their pastoral and prophetic ministries.
3. Adopts and reiterates the statement of participants at the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches, held in May 1980 at Melbourne, Australia, united under the prayer "Thy Kingdom Come", which expresses "our deepest solidarity with the suffering and demands of the people of El Salvador and of all the Latin American people".
4. Appeals to the nations in the region of Central and North America to abstain from interfering in the internal affairs of El Salvador, so that the people and their chosen organizations may be free to participate fully in the search for a more peaceful, more just and more human society.
5. Draws attention of the member churches of the WCC, in this respect, to the Resolution on El Salvador adopted by the Governing Board of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, on 7 May 1980, and particularly to its resolution urging

"the United States Government:

1. To halt all assistance to the military and police of El Salvador and to relocate the recently approved military aid of \$ 5.7 million dollars to medical, economic and social assistance programmes, the benefits of which should be distributed in El Salvador by civilian or international agencies.
2. To guarantee that it would not intervene directly or covertly to determine the fate of the Salvadorean people.

3. To grasp the historic moment and update and transform its traditional policy in Central America by seeking to respond positively to the popular forces emerging in El Salvador".
6. Calls upon the Secretary General of the United Nations and that of the Organization of American States to take urgent steps to investigate the situation of institutional violence in El Salvador, and to mobilize all means at their disposal to support the search for solutions consistent with the aspirations of the Salvadorean people and of their chosen organizations.

3. CCIA/WCC SUBMISSION TO UN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

The following text was submitted for circulation to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights at its 37th Session in Geneva on 19 February 1981 by the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches:

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

WRITTEN STATEMENT SUBMITTED BY THE COMMISSION OF THE CHURCHES ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, A NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION IN CATEGORY II CONSULATIVE STATUS

The World Council of Churches (WCC) which is represented in the United Nations system through the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs has followed closely recent developments in El Salvador. It has repeatedly expressed the concern for the restoration of fundamental human rights in El Salvador seeking to inform world opinion through several fact-finding and fraternal visits. It has supported the Salvadorean people and agencies which are engaged in the defence of their human rights through material assistance, solidarity actions and prayer. Continuing killings, death threats, imprisonments and torture to Salvadoreans including a large number of active church people have convinced the WCC that justice for the aggrieved, protection for those threatened and subject to repression and an end to the systematic repression and extermination which have characterized that nation throughout the recent period, demand greater support for the people of El Salvador.

A recent document prepared and published in January 1981 by the Socorro Juridico of the Archbishop of San Salvador entitled "El Salvador: Del Genocidio de la Junta Militar a la Esperanza de la Lucha Insurreccional" contains up to date and further evidence not only of the widespread extent of political killings and assassinations but also of the involvement of the military and security forces of the Republic of El Salvador and their paramilitary allies in the assassinations. An analysis of the occupational background of these victims led the Socorro to the conclusion that there exists in El Salvador a "systematic and intentional extermination campaign". This document provides monthly statistics for the period January to August 1980 totalling 211 reported political disappearances which continue to occur at an escalating rate.

In addition, the Socorro document describes a situation of repression in which the church has frequently suffered with the people, with the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero y Galdamez symbolizing the experience of many others. The clergy and religious orders of his diocese commemorated his life and death in appealing on 30 March 1980 for an immediate stop to repression, true respect for human rights, particularly "that right for which he struggled so hard, that the poor, peasants and workers alike be allowed to organize". Further, they asked other countries to help "not by sending weapons of death, but by offering support, understanding, and help for life".

The Central Committee of the WCC, meeting in August 1980, issued a statement which viewed with great concern the increasing escalation of repression and violence in Central America and

particularly in El Salvador. It called upon "the military authorities of the Government of El Salvador immediately to cease all repressive activities", affirmed "its full spiritual, moral, material and economic support to the churches in El Salvador", reiterated "the deepest solidarity with the suffering and demands of the people", appealed "to nations to abstain from interfering in the internal affairs of El Salvador". It drew attention of the member churches of the WCC to the 7 May 1980 Resolution of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America which called on the United States Government to halt all assistance to the military and police of El Salvador.

The Executive Committee of the WCC, meeting in Geneva 9-13 February 1981, reaffirming the Central Committee statement "with force", added:

"We have followed with profound concern the development of events since then. We deplore in particular the severe attacks upon the clergy and lay people of the churches in El Salvador as they carry out courageous and exemplary ministries of pastoral and prophetic solidarity with the population.

"We deplore the fact that direct military assistance to El Salvador from various sources, has increased violence and repression and delayed the search for peace. We urgently appeal that such interference cease, and call on our member churches to press for a respect for the dignity, integrity and resolve of the El Salvadorean people to determine their own future. We view with particular alarm recent reports that the United States Government has increased military, economic and political support to the El Salvadorean military authorities.

"We express our deep sense of community with our sisters and brothers in El Salvador, who are representative of the churches and people of that country in the suffering which they endure and in the struggle they have made their own.

"We call upon our sister churches and communities in Latin America, nationally and regionally, to join with us in engaging in intercessory prayer, action and support on behalf of the El Salvadorean people. We join with the Latin American Council of Churches (in formation), in its recent letter to the Christian Churches in El Salvador that 'we are convinced that the God whom we worship and serve is the Lord of history' and 'that as Christians we are called to be members of the same body'."

In its statement in August, the Central Committee called upon the Secretary-General of the United Nations "to take urgent steps to investigate the situation of institutional violence in El Salvador, and to mobilize all means at their disposal to support the search for solutions consistent with the aspirations of the Salvadorean people and of their chosen organizations".

Recalling the United Nations General Assembly resolution 35/192, passed on 15 December 1980, the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs welcomes the proposal contained in E/CN.4/NGO/299 and urges the current session of the Commission on Human Rights to give serious consideration to the proposal of appointing a special rapporteur for the situation in El Salvador.

4. CCIA/WCC ORAL INTERVENTION TO UN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

The following text was presented orally to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights at its 37th Session in Geneva on 9 March 1981 by Mr. Roberto J. Cuellar M., Executive Director of the *Socorro Juridico del Arzobispado San Salvador*, on behalf of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches :

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

TEXT OF THE ORAL INTERVENTION BY THE COMMISSION OF THE CHURCHES ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, A NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION IN CATEGORY II CONSULTATIVE STATUS, TO THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS, AT ITS THIRTY-SEVENTH SESSION, CONCERNING EL SALVADOR, UNDER AGENDA ITEM 13

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for this opportunity to address the Commission on behalf of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches, a Non-Governmental Organization in consultative status in which are joined over 300 Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox churches in some 100 countries. It also maintains close relations with the Roman Catholic Church.

Mr. Chairman,

Our Commission has circulated Document E/CN.4/NGO 314 which contains recent statements by the World Council of Churches on the situation in El Salvador, a country characterized by systematic and gross violations of human rights. This affirmation is based on the daily experience, and copious documentation which has been gathered by the Legal Aid Department (*Socorro Juridico*) of the Archdiocese of San Salvador, of which I am the Director, and in whose name I speak. We have been uniquely placed to hear from every corner of our country the cruelty and humiliation the common people suffer.

It is a privilege for me to bring their voice here and to be able to share with you the deep concerns of the Salvadorean people. What I shall say is not an invented construction of our situation, it is the living reality of a people.

Mr. Chairman,

In its resolution 35/192 (15 December 1980), the General Assembly made reference to the brutal assassination of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, a man of faith who had come to symbolize the struggle of our people for justice. As the world knows, he was gunned down in cold blood by an assassin as he was celebrating the mass in a hospital in San Salvador.

During his brief three years in the episcopate, Archbishop Romero became a staunch advocate of human rights and of the cause of the people of our country: he consistently denounced the sinful practices he saw about him and with a force comparable only to the prophets of old, and of Bishop Bartholomé de las Casas, the defender of the Indians of Central America. He never let up in his outspokenness and, contrary to some others, did not place the security of the Church above the need to denounce injustice. He was the "voice of the voiceless". No regime has succeeded in destroying the authenticity of Monsignor Romero's witness. As Christ had done, the Archbishop said, just before his death, that during the three years of his preaching none could accuse him of falsehood. It was necessary to assassinate him in order to silence him.

The cases of the violation of human rights which the Archbishop enumerated each Sunday, had been subject to a rigorous process of corroboration and legal review by the Legal Aid Department of the Archdiocese. Since his martyrdom we have endeavored to fulfill his mandate to us: (Quote) "If they assassinate me", he said to the staff, "you must continue defending the rights of my oppressed and poor people" (Unquote). It is precisely because we carry out the martyr's will that those who illegally govern El Salvador raided the offices of the Legal Aid Department on 5 July

1980 with the intention of eliminating the evidence we held which proved that the clandestine death squads and other right-wing extremist groups were linked to the Armed Forces and their military security apparatus.

The authorities have also attempted to eliminate available evidence concerning the assassination of Monsignor Romero, and of the persecution of the Church, which, during 1980, claimed the lives of six priests and involved some 150 terrorist acts directly attributable to the Salvadorean military and, in some cases, to foreign military groups.

Mr. Chairman,

We are able to affirm and document the present situation of human rights in El Salvador as follows :

1. The violation of human rights in El Salvador has a long history. Between 1977 and 1979 four investigations were carried out by impartial observers — the Department of State of the United States of America; the Parliamentary Commission of Great Britain; the Interamerican Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States, and the International Commission of Jurists. Their findings and recommendations are well known. Following the military coup d'etat on 15 October 1979, the procedures by which sanctions would have been applied against the Government of General Romero for the violation of human rights in El Salvador were suspended. From this date on, contrary to the statements made by the new governing military group, and to expectations of the international community, the constant violation of human rights has not diminished, but rather has increased significantly.

2. The substantiated available data indicate that, since 15 October 1979, large sectors of the Salvadorean population have been targeted for systematic extermination, and that to this end instruments have been developed and refined by the regime in power. How does the record of the present regime compare to its predecessor ? During the 21-month period from January of 1978 through September 1979 Monsignor Romero and the Legal Aid Department of his Archdiocese denounced 727 political assassinations attributable to government forces. Those responsible for the 15 October 1979 coup d'etat gave as a justification for this act the need to put an end to these atrocities. In the three months following the coup (15 October-31 December 1979), 450 assassinations were committed by the new military regime. It was for this very reason that a majority of the members of the new military junta resigned at the end of the year, charging that the regime was engaged in generalized repression with massive foreign aid assistance, under the guise of a so-called agrarian reform programme.

After January 1980 the number of assassinations and disappearances increased. During the first four months of the year more people were killed by groups related to the military than during all of 1979. During these months we heard the indomitable voice of Monsignor Romero demand, in the name of God, that "the repression cease now", asking that there be no outside collaboration with the illegal military regime, either through provision of military advisors or through further arms shipments, since such collaboration would only contribute to greater injustice and to further bloodshed.

The tragic history of the subsequent eight months of 1980 is an eloquent indication that neither the military regime, nor its supporters abroad had heeded the voice of Monsignor Romero. His warnings continued until those he denounced chose to silence him by the assassin's bullet.

The total number of defenceless victims among the Salvadorean population — not counting those whose lives were lost in direct confrontations with the armed forces — victims who have been assassinated by the government armed and security forces, comes to 8,660 documented cases. To this figure must be added the 4,400 victims of the civilian population — mostly women and children — who died in operations of "total extermination" carried out during the past three months by the Salvadorean armed forces.

In absolute terms, these figures greatly exceed those for which the previous government of General Carlos Romero was so sharply criticized by the Inter-American community in October 1979.

3. Qualitatively, the violations of human rights have become more serious as the deliberate policy of extermination has been carried out in the countryside by the armed forces, with the help of foreign military advisors, which has resulted in the physical elimination of leaders of significant

international renown and who defended the cause of the poor and the oppressed among the Salvadorean people.

Salvadorean military personnel were implicated not only in the assassination of Monsignor Oscar Romero, but also in those of the democratic opposition leadership, numerous priests, and the North American nuns. And this is a government which calls itself Christian!

Members of the present government who opposed the practice of extermination have themselves been assassinated or have been forced to flee the country. In the most recent documented report of the Archdiocese of San Salvador, made available to the Division of Human Rights, on 25 February 1981, it is stated that "the Army, and security forces assassinated 257 defenceless persons between 14-20 February. In one month of martial law, 300 defenceless persons were murdered. The majority were abducted from their homes. From June 1980 to January 1981, the Army and the security forces assassinated 202 children, of which 58 were 1 to 10 years of age (the rest from 11 through 15)". It can therefore be safely concluded that the illegal and dictatorial government has not heeded the recommendations contained in General Assembly Resolution 35/192.

Mr. Chairman,

As Christians seeking to achieve justice, the necessary basis of peace, we regret the nature of international attention which has been paid of late to El Salvador. It is harmful to the whole American continent, to those governments all over the world which respect human rights, and in an increasingly serious way to world peace itself.

Central America, and especially now El Salvador, has become an international political laboratory for a set of demonic, violent experiments, the object of which is a people which longs only for justice, for peace, and for its right to determine its own affairs. The people suffers. As has so often happened in the course of the history of our continent, the people has been left to one side, its basic rights trampled or ignored.

Mr. Chairman,

It is not through pouring more arms into our country that human rights will become respected. It is not through sending foreign military advisors to improve the capacity of a regime to impose its will by force, that the rule of law will be established. It is not by distorting and hiding the truth that justice will be achieved. It is not through a war against a people that peace will be constructed.

It is with deep regret that we must conclude that the primary responsibility for the violations of human rights in El Salvador lies with the Salvadorean military regime. The testimonies of violations of human rights which we have compiled over the years constitute incontrovertible proof. This documentation is public and available. We hope that this Commission will examine and analyze it. We are convinced that a study of the facts as provided by the people themselves will eliminate the confusion which has been quite deliberately created by those at home and abroad who have their own narrow interests at heart. We sincerely hope that all governments and peoples of the world will demonstrate their commitment to the lofty principles of human rights which it is the task of this Commission to safeguard, and refuse to become accomplices to the crucifixion of the Salvadorean people.

We call upon those now aligned with the forces of repression in El Salvador to cease their nefarious support for this war against our people, the vast majority of whom are Christian, a people which has been denied its rightful voice in such important international forums as this one. We sincerely hope that this voice will be heard. We pray that it will awaken in this Commission, and in the whole of the international community a commitment to aid us in our efforts to gain respect for the rights of all our people, including our right to democracy and self-determination.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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